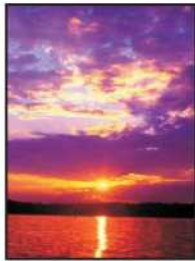


Scoping Report

Yuma Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

September 28, 2004



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Prepared for:

Yuma Field Office
Yuma, Arizona

Prepared by:



TETRA TECH, INC.

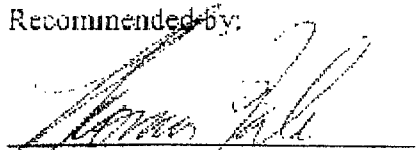
YUMA FIELD OFFICE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SCOPING REPORT

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma Field Office**

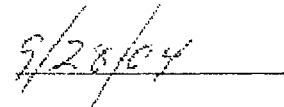
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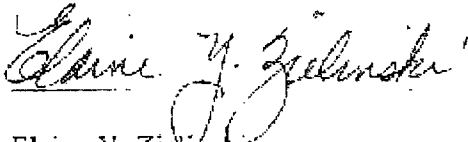


Thomas Zalc
Acting, Yuma Field Office Manager

Date:



Approved by:



Elaine Y. Zielinski
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Date:



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACEC	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
AGFD	Arizona Game and Fish Department
ALRIS	Arizona Land Resources Information System
AML	abandoned mine land
AWC	Arizona Wilderness Coalition
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CRU	Community Resource Unit
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FGDC	Federal Geographic Data Committee
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
GIS	Geographic Information System
HMA	Herd Management Area
HMAP	Herd Management Area Plan
IM	Instruction Memorandum
JKA	James Kent & Associates
LCRMSCP	Lower Colorado River Multiple Species Conservation Plan
LTVA	Long Term Visitor Area
LUP	land use plan
MSCP	Multiple Species Conservation Plan
MTP	master title plat
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
OHV	off-highway vehicle
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purposes Act
RMIS	Recreation Management Information System
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RV	recreational vehicle
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WO	Washington Office
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WA	Wilderness Area
YFO	Yuma Field Office
YPG	Yuma Proving Grounds

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Yuma Field Office (YFO), is preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The YFO planning area encompasses 1.2 million acres along the lower Colorado River in southwest Arizona and southeast California, extending as far east as the Maricopa County line.

An EIS is being prepared to identify potential effects of implementing alternative management approaches for this RMP and to identify appropriate measures to mitigate potential impacts. The EIS will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), and other associated regulations.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

YFO manages public lands under three land use plans (LUP) and nine LUP amendments. BLM has also prepared two monitoring plans for public lands managed by YFO to ensure that management actions meet plan objectives consistent with the original plans.

A Land Use Plan Evaluation was completed December 2000. The evaluation concluded that a majority of the RMP decisions were either being implemented or had been implemented. As a result of Field Office boundary adjustments and managing under multiple plans, it was recommended that a revision and consolidation of the RMP be undertaken. The objective of the planning effort is to produce a revised RMP that achieves the following:

- Creates a common vision for the planning area.
- Updates the existing management decisions for the lands in the YFO, where necessary.
- Addresses new data and integrates or modifies uses of public land that have occurred since the Yuma District RMP and other associated amendments and management/activity plans were completed.
- Addresses lands incorporated into the Field Office boundary from the Lower Gila South and Lower Gila North planning areas.
- Utilizes a collaborative approach in developing the plan with neighboring communities, the public, interested groups, and all levels of government to ensure that the RMP will best meet the needs of the future. Collaborators/partners will be involved in plan implementation as well as plan development.

- Actively engages BLM staff with the planning process, particularly regarding collaboration with partners, identification of plan issues, and development of viable alternatives.

1.3 PLANNING AREA

The planning area extends northward along the lower Colorado River from the United States-Mexico boundary at San Luis, Arizona to north of Blythe, California and Ehrenberg, Arizona. The eastern boundary extends to the Eagletail Mountains Wilderness Area (WA) and south along the Yuma and Maricopa county lines to the northern boundary of the Barry Goldwater Range. The western boundary generally follows the Colorado River including lands on the California side. The planning area is located in Yuma, La Paz, and Maricopa counties in Arizona and Imperial and Riverside counties in California (see Figure 1 – Project Location Map).

YFO manages a diverse combination of land and resources. The field office includes the lower Colorado River, a destination for hundreds of thousands of visitors seeking year-round water-related and off-highway recreation. On average, 250,000 visitors utilize the Quartzsite Long-Term Visitors Area (LTVA) and the five surrounding 14-day campsites on an annual basis. Within the YFO are four WAs in Arizona and portions of four different WAs in California. The YFO maintains an active lands program overseeing right-of-way usage for major utility corridors connecting energy-rich states (Texas, Wyoming, and New Mexico) to California through Arizona. Complex issues involve public lands actions from two states – California and Arizona. The YFO has an active fire management program which addresses wildland urban interface, hazardous fuel reduction, and wildland fire suppression.

Lands adjacent to the YFO planning area that require consideration in the management of the YFO include adjacent BLM Field Offices – Lake Havasu, Phoenix, and El Centro, Bureau of Reclamation, Imperial National Wildlife Refuge, Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground, Marine Corps Air Station – Yuma (Barry M. Goldwater Range), Cocopah Reservation, Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Reservation, Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation, Arizona State Lands, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), and several private land owners including the regional irrigation districts.

Where urban interface issues are present, YFO collaborates with cities and towns next to public land including the City of Yuma and Town of Quartzsite; the Arizona communities of San Luis, Somerton, Dateland, Wellton, Palo Verde, Ehrenberg, and Hyder; and Blythe, California, all of whom have expressed interest in collaborating with BLM in the planning process.

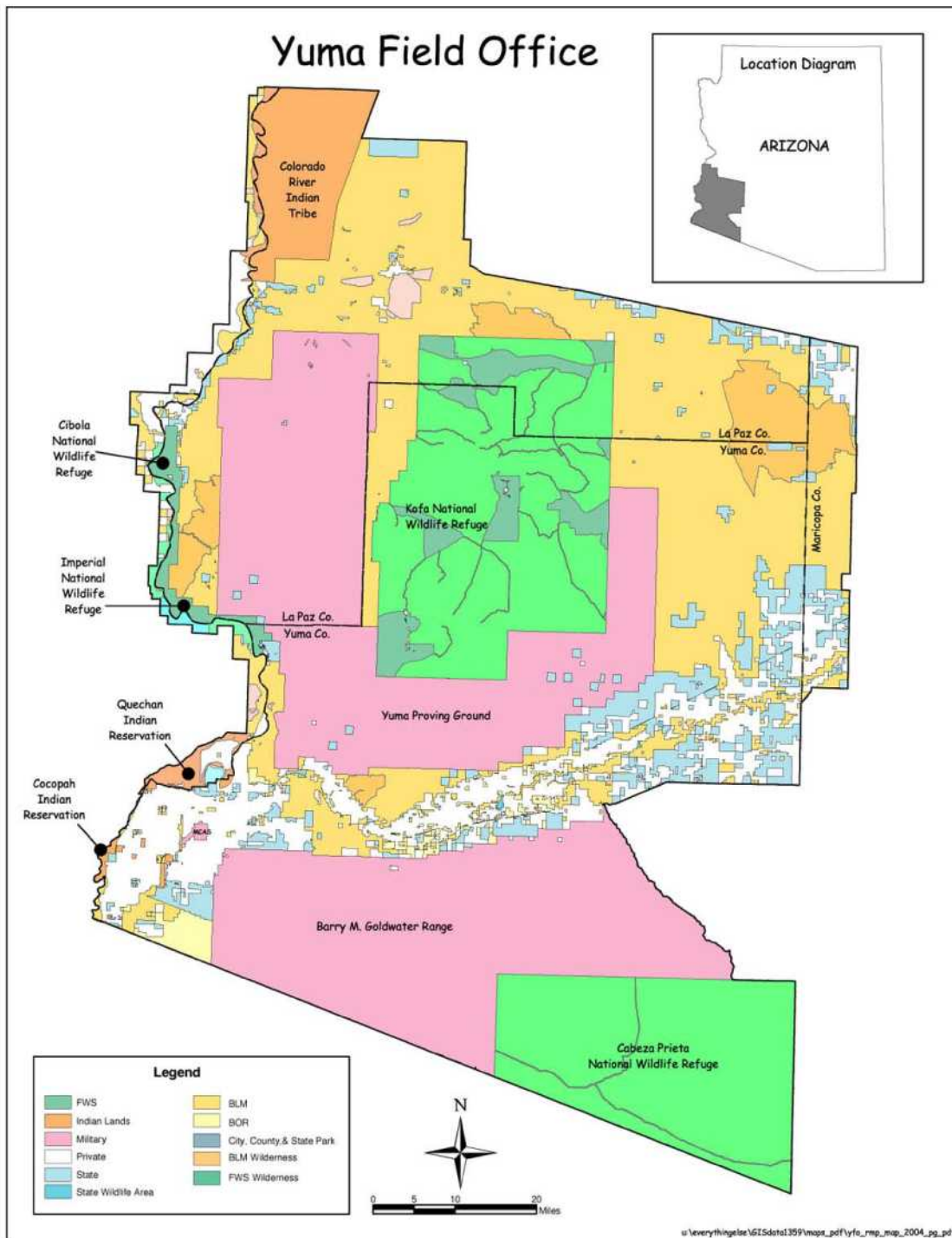


Figure 1
Project Location Map

1.4 SCOPING PROCESS

Scoping is a process to identify, early in the planning process, the views, issues, and concerns regarding the project, of a wide variety of organizations and individuals including numerous federal agencies in the area and region, state agencies from Arizona and California, tribal entities, local agencies, and the general public. The intent is to determine the interests and desired future management from the public users. Objectives of scoping also include evaluating issues; determining the range of alternatives to be evaluated; identifying environmental review and consultation requirements; and developing the environmental analysis process and technical studies to address scoping issues in the RMP/EIS. For this project, BLM is the lead agency and responsible for the preparation of the RMP/EIS. Provided below is a summary of activities that occurred during the scoping period, including notices and methods available to submit comments. In addition to formal comment forms, the public was invited to submit comments via U.S. Postal Service, email, fax, or directly to the YFO. Appendix A contains copies of all project notices and comment forms distributed during the scoping period.

Notice of Intent

The official start of the YFO RMP/EIS and public scoping process began with a Notice of Intent to prepare an RMP and EIS published within the *Federal Register*. The Notice of Intent was published on March 30, 2004 (Vol. 69, Number 61, Pages 16608-16609, [AZ 050-04-1610-DO; 1610]). A copy of the Notice of Intent is included in Appendix A.

Legal Notices and Press Releases

Legal notices appeared in the regional newspapers a minimum of 15 days prior to the date a public meeting was conducted. The legal notices announcing the public scoping meetings were published in the following newspapers:

- *Yuma Daily Sun*
- *Palo Verde Valley Times*
- *Bajo El Sol*
- *Arizona Republic*

In addition, BLM prepared a press release to introduce the project and announce the scoping meetings and their respective locations. These public notices and releases were issued in May 2004 to local and regional newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. Appendix A contains a list of the entities that received the press release.

Information Postcard and Flyer

BLM prepared an informational postcard as well as a flyer. The postcard was sent to a mailing list of approximately 1,200 recipients and announced the intent to prepare an RMP and EIS for the public lands managed by the YFO. The National Mailing List System provided the foundation for the mailing list. Then YFO added federal, state, Tribal, county, and city agencies that are within the YFO planning area. YFO customers such as lessees, those with rights-of-way, and permittees were also included. Organizations and individuals who expressed an interest were then added. The postcard also announced the scoping meeting schedule and provided contact information for the YFO. A comment form was provided with the postcard with a place to record written issues, update a mailing address, or request personal information be withheld from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Approximately 250 copies of the informational flyer were distributed for posting in BLM field offices and community locations such as gas stations, post offices, recreation site bulletin boards, off-highway vehicle (OHV) sites, etc. An additional 75 flyers were produced in Spanish and distributed to appropriate locations. Appendix A contains a copy of the postcard, flyer, and a list of locations at which the flyer was posted.

Scoping Meetings

A total of four public scoping meetings hosted by BLM and attended by more than 150 people were held in June 2004 during the scoping period. Table 1 lists all meeting locations, dates and times, the total number of attendees, and the number of participants.

TABLE 1 PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS				
Location	Date	Time	Sign- In Sheet Attendance	Estimated Actual Attendance
Yuma, Arizona	June 1, 2004	5-7 p.m.	62	100
Blythe, California	June 2, 2004	5-7 p.m.	18	30
Quartzsite, Arizona	June 3, 2004	3-5 p.m.	46	50
Roll, Arizona	June 4, 2004	5-7 p.m.	24	30
Total			150	210

The meetings were held in an open house format to allow for an informal one-on-one exchange of information. Several stations were set-up with various BLM representatives at each one to respond to specific questions. Meeting participants were able to review maps and display boards associated with the RMP/EIS process. At each meeting, handouts and comment forms were available. The comment form asked respondents to state what they value about public lands, what uses are important on public lands, how they would like to see the resources of the area managed, and if there were any other comments they wished to provide to BLM. The questions on the comment form were identical to those questions provided on the postcard mailing. BLM

also invited participants to submit comments in formats other than the comment forms including letters and email messages.

Recreational Vehicle Park Managers' Letter

As part of BLM's effort to involve winter visitors, a letter was sent June 16, 2004 to the managers of approximately 83 recreational vehicle (RV) parks. The letter (included in Appendix A) informed the RV park managers that the YFO was initiating its RMP planning process and encouraged park managers to share this information with residents through park newsletters, bulletin boards, and informal networks that many of the parks maintain throughout the off season.

1.5 COLLABORATIVE PLANNING PROCESS

BLM's intent in using a collaborative process is to work together with other entities and individuals in order to address common needs and goals within the planning area. The effort involves the early identification of the most appropriate, efficient, and productive type of working relationships to achieve meaningful results in land use planning initiatives. BLM's primary objectives of the proposed collaboration process include providing a comprehensive forum for public involvement in order to achieve defensible decisions for the RMP; promoting multilevel agency and multi-jurisdictional participation in the planning and management process at the local and state level; utilizing internet and other modern technologies to provide real time information between the community and agencies; and integrating science into the collaborative effort to produce management decisions that not only are supported and understood by the majority of the public, but also protect natural and cultural resources.

Agency, Tribal, and public coordination and consultation are integral to a successful collaborative planning process. Collaboration with adjacent federal, state, tribal, city, and county governments will occur according to the guidelines in the "Partnership Series," a suite of courses that address, among other subjects, community development and collaboration. Provided below is a description of these activities for BLM YFO RMP/EIS process.

Agency Coordination

BLM contacted federal, state, county, and local agencies as part of initiating coordination and collaboration efforts. Agencies received postcards and were invited to comment as part of the initial scoping process and during individual agency meetings with Yuma BLM management staff. A list of agencies contacted is shown below.

Additionally, the YFO has met individually with the local offices of several Yuma area agencies for the purpose of discussing the RMP and to explain the statewide organizational change that BLM-Arizona is undergoing. Members of the YFO staff handed out RMP materials and

presented a slide show when requested. YFO facilitated discussions with the agencies, which generated issues and concerns that are documented in Section 2 - Issue Summary. Meetings with area agencies were conducted during June, July, and August 2004. To date, BLM staff has met with 13 agencies, which are marked in the list below with an asterisk (*).

BLM has a national Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with USFWS to cooperate on Section 7 Consultation for the Endangered Species Act. AGFD has an established statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the BLM and plans to use this agreement to work collaboratively with the YFO.

Federal

- Bureau of Indian Affairs – Colorado River Agency, Phoenix Area Office, Yuma Area Office*
- Bureau of Mines
- Bureau of Reclamation – Phoenix Area Office; Yuma Area Office*; Boulder City, Nevada Regional Office
- Council on Environmental Quality
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Highway Administration
- International Boundary and Water Commission*
- National Park Service
 - Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument
 - National Trails System
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, California
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Lower Colorado River Resource Conservation and Development
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service
- U.S. Department of Defense, Air Force, Luke Air Force Base
- U.S. Department of Defense, Army Corps of Engineers – Los Angeles Regional Office, Phoenix Project Office, Tucson Office
- U.S. Department of Defense, Army, Yuma Proving Ground*
- U.S. Department of Defense, Marine Corps Air Station – Yuma
- U.S. Department of Defense, Navy
- U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Safety and Health
- U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration – Arizona State Office, Colorado State Office
- U.S. Department on Homeland Security, Border Patrol – Yuma Office*; Southwest Border Alliance – Yuma
- U.S. Department of Interior, Environmental Policy and Compliance
- U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge
- Cibola National Wildlife Refuge*
- Imperial National Wildlife Refuge
- Kofa National Wildlife Refuge*
- Arizona Ecological Field Office
- U.S. Forest Service – Arizona Zone Office
- U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division

State

- Arizona Department of Agriculture
- Arizona Department of Commerce
- Arizona Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality – State Office, Air Quality Division, and Yuma Community Liaison
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Arizona Department of Mines and Mineral Resources
- Arizona Department of Public Safety
- Arizona Department of Transportation*
- Arizona Department of Water Resources
- Arizona Game and Fish Department –Yuma* and Phoenix offices
- Arizona Geological Survey
- Arizona Governor’s Office
- Arizona Office of the Attorney General
- Arizona State Historic Preservation Office
- Arizona State House of Representatives
- Arizona State Land Department
- Arizona State Mine Inspector
- Arizona State Parks
 - State Office
 - Yuma Crossing State Historic Park
 - Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park
- California Department of Boating and Safety
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Food and Agriculture
- California Department of Public Works
- California Department of Toxic Substances
- California Department of Transportation
- California Governor’s Office
- California State Historic Preservation Office
- California State Lands Commission
- California State Parks, Picacho State Recreation Area
- Colorado River Commission of Nevada
- Offices of U.S. Senators McCain and Kyl

County

- Imperial County, California
 - Board of Supervisors
 - Department of Planning and Building
 - Agriculture Commission
- La Paz County, Arizona
 - Community Development
 - Health Department
 - Public Works
- Maricopa County, Arizona
 - Board of Supervisors
 - Department of Transportation
 - Flood Control District
 - Health Department
- Mohave County, Arizona – Public Land Use Commission
- Riverside County, California
- Yuma County, Arizona
 - Board of Supervisors*
 - Development Services
 - Public Works Department
 - Sheriff's Department*

Local

- City of Blythe, California
- City of Kingman, Arizona Parks and Recreation Department
- City of Needles, California
- City of San Luis, Arizona
- City of Somerton, Arizona
- City of Tucson, Arizona
- City of Yuma, Arizona
 - City Council*
 - Parks and Recreation Department
 - Public Works Department
- Greater Yuma Economic Development Council
- Metropolitan Water District, Los Angeles
- Town of Quartzsite, Arizona
- Yuma Area Government Alliance Meeting
- Yuma Chamber of Commerce*
- Yuma International Airport
- Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization

Coordination and collaboration with these agencies will continue throughout the entire planning process.

Cooperating Agencies/Invitees

As a part of initiating multiple planning efforts throughout the state, BLM compiled a list of federal, state, county, and local agencies and Native American tribes that may have a relevant interest in the planning process. A letter was sent to more than 200 agencies to introduce the various RMP/EIS processes, identify the upcoming data gathering efforts, and offer an opportunity to become a cooperating agency in the planning effort. A cooperating agency meeting was held at the BLM Arizona State Office on October 30, 2002. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss BLM's planning process, collaborative planning, and the meaning and responsibilities of cooperating agency status. Opportunities for involvement in BLM's planning process without becoming a cooperating agency were also discussed. BLM emphasized that the goal was to encourage involvement by all interested parties using whatever methods the parties preferred.

YFO will utilize the criteria within WO IM 2002-149, "Cooperating Agency Arrangements during National Environmental Policy Act Decisionmaking and Land Use Planning," to determine which agencies to invite as a cooperator. YFO will approach a number of federal, state, county, and local agencies for cooperating agency status, including but not limited to BOR; MCAS; YPG; Kofa, Imperial, and Cibola NWRs; Yuma County; Riverside County; Imperial County; Maricopa County; and City of Yuma.

AGFD is currently operating under a statewide cooperating agency agreement and meets on a quarterly basis with the YFO to coordinate management actions. Other agencies for which BLM has a statewide MOU include Arizona Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration.

Agencies that decline the invitation to become a cooperator in the YFO RMP process will continue to be updated with planning bulletins.

Consultation with Tribes

YFO initiated tribal consultation with 29 tribes within Arizona, New Mexico, and California on June 18, 2004. A list of tribes and a copy of the consultation letter are included in Appendix A.

In the letter, BLM requested the opportunity to make a presentation on the RMP/EIS planning process at a tribal council meeting or a tribal community meeting so that council members and individuals in the tribe would have the opportunity to participate in the process and be informed about future management actions within the YFO. These efforts will continue throughout the planning and EIS process.

As of the date of this report, six tribes have responded and expressed interest in continuing to receive information and be involved in the planning process. The Mescalero Apache Tribe, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, and Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe have all responded with a letter of interest. Three tribes responded with a request for face-to-face meetings and presentations. To date, BLM staff has met with Tohono O'odham Legislative Council, Hualapai Tribe, and Fort-Yuma Quechan Tribe. At the time of contact, the Cocopah Tribe was conducting elections for Tribal Council. They postponed a meeting until the appropriate people to contact were determined.

BLM is conducting a follow-up phone call to each of the 29 tribes that received the initial consultation letter. Meetings with tribes and tribal leaders will be an ongoing effort throughout the planning process.

Discovery Process

YFO contracted the services of James Kent and Associates (JKA) on May 2001 to assist staff with the development of a preparation plan. In order to gain an improved understanding of the interests and concerns of winter visitors, the YFO retained the services of JKA to conduct agency outreach. JKA staff worked with YFO staff during the week of February 23-27, 2004 in a training session called the Discovery Process Weeklong. BLM participants were instructed in a series of techniques for conducting field interviews with the public with the goal of identifying citizen issues, especially those of the winter visitors to the Yuma area. Termed the Discovery ProcessTM, a key element is to engage members of the public who may otherwise not be represented and gather feedback about the public's feelings about public land management through one-on-one conversations that take place in common gathering areas. Other goals of the Discovery ProcessTM include developing a communication strategy for future collaborative planning efforts with winter visitors and developing staff capacity for a community-based management approach (JKA 2004). An overview of the process, results from interviews conducted as part of the Discovery ProcessTM, collaboration strategies, and a map of community units were presented in the JKA report, "Identifying the Interests and Issues of Winter Visitors in the Yuma Area: A Social Ecology Approach to Community-Based Management."

The findings of the Discovery ProcessTM were aggregated into seven general themes applicable to the planning area as a whole: (1) people believe BLM is doing a good job; (2) people bring their public land issues with them from their state of origin; (3) most issues are related to services and information, but very few to basic policy; (4) desert dumping will be an issue that has to be addressed, outside of planning; (5) ongoing urban environmental education will always be the focus of the YFO; (6) awareness is low about public lands (i.e., where people can legally go), and the regulations operating on public lands; and (7) some YFO staff recognize the need for improvements in reaching out to their publics.

Citizen issues were also organized by Community Resource Units (CRU), which are defined by JKA as "generally small settlements or parts of towns where face-to-face relationships dominate through strong caretaking systems and personal recognition," and as "the units by which people

distinguish one settlement from another” (JKA 2004). At least 13 CRUs were identified within the YFO planning area. Limited resources precluded full study of every CRU. The issues raised by citizens during interviews in the six surveyed CRUs are summarized below.

Quartzsite CRU

- **Management of the LTVAs** – Concerns about dumping, vehicles going too fast in the LTVAs, generator noise in campgrounds, and need for more dump and water stations.
- **Tax Burdens** – Issues about compensation for the police and fire departments’ costs to respond to emergencies in its service area, which includes the LTVAs. In effect, the taxpayers of its district subsidize the camping areas.
- **Land Availability** – Business owners expressed interest in BLM releasing land for development. Some residents from the Town of Quartzsite were frustrated about the lack of additional rights-of-way and Recreation and Public Purpose (R&PP) leases.
- **Information** – More informational maps and brochures were requested, as was information about appropriate areas for recreational vehicle (RV) waste dumping.
- **Desert Dumping** – Volunteers are willing to help with clean up, and it was suggested that BLM put out trash receptacles.

Oxbow CRU

- **Information** – Visitors had questions about wood collection and campfires.
- **Facilities and Services** – Visitors expressed desire for water, access to closed areas, increased parking areas, and telephone service.

Martinez CRU

- **Management** – Citizens expressed desire to participate with BLM through partnerships and other activities.
- **Information** – Citizens requested more information about recreational opportunities, fee structures, and maps of public land locations.
- **Facilities and Services** – Citizen concerns included lack of water services, insufficient road maintenance, and additional dump stations.

- **Resource Impacts** – Concerns included access for OHV activity, dumpsite clean-ups, and wildlife impacts by OHV users.

Yuma Metro CRU

- **Resource Impacts** – Citizen concerns included desert dumping and dust control problems.
- **Information** – Comments included requests for more information about recreation opportunities and more presence by BLM staff.

Foothills CRU

- **Management and Protection** – Citizen comments included praise for BLM getting water to LTVAs; the sentiment that there were “too many rules on public land,” and a lack of law enforcement to enforce the rules; desire to not sell or develop area south of Telegraph Pass; and desire for maintenance of open space.
- **Information** – Desires for improved brochures, increased availability of brochures and maps, increased education about rules, brochures on flora and fauna, better signage.
- **Recreation Access** – Did not agree with decision to close Imperial Sand Dunes, desire for more information about short-term camping opportunities, rotate camping areas, and wish that Golden Eagle passports were accepted for all public lands.
- **Resource Impacts** – Need more education to address desert dumping. Other concerns included dust control problems and fire management.

The Dome-Wellton/Dateland Area (combination of 3 CRUs)

- **Management** – Wanted to know why specific areas are closed. Desire to partner with BLM.
- **Information** – Need information at Visitor Information Bureau, desire for more maps, better signage, and more information about camping areas and what rules are.

In addition to including representative comments on the above issues, the JKA report provides generalized findings and themes about citizen comments, as well as communication opportunities (strategies for reaching the public), and action opportunities (ideas for specific activities to reach the public). The full report is available through the YFO office.

SECTION 2 – ISSUE SUMMARY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The scoping period officially commenced with publication of the *Federal Register* Notice of Intent on March 30, 2004. While BLM welcomes and considers public comment throughout the planning process, BLM requested that all initial scoping comments be submitted by June 30, 2004, in order to identify the issues to be addressed in the planning studies. Written comments were submitted to BLM by comment cards, meeting comment forms, in letters, and via email. BLM also noted comments received during agency and tribal consultation meetings as well as other meetings or conversations with the public. BLM will continue to consider public comments throughout development of the RMP/EIS.

2.2 COMMENT COMPILATION

During the scoping period, BLM received a total of approximately 433 written responses in the form of letters, email messages, and comment forms/comment cards. BLM also recorded 34 comments on flip charts that were available for the public's use at the public scoping meetings, for a total of 467 responses received during scoping.

Approximately 261 of the written responses were received via email as an identical "form letter," accounting for more than 60 percent of the written responses. Therefore, including the content of the form letter there were a total of 173 unique written responses. The form letter discussed issues including the identification and protection of areas with wilderness characteristics, protection of supplemental values, restoration, OHV use and access, travel route designations, Sonoran pronghorn, and international border issues.

In addition to the form letter, 172 individuals, agencies, and/or special interest groups submitted written responses. Of these, the majority (125 or about 72 percent) of written responses were provided on comment cards or comment forms. Both forms asked the public to provide information about (1) what they value about public lands, (2) which uses are important, (3) how the resources of the area should be managed, and (4) other comments they wished to provide to BLM. Issues identified in the flip-chart comments received at the meetings were generally repeated in the written comments received during the scoping period.

Comment letters were received from the following agencies and organizations:

Federal

- Federal Highway Administration

State

- Arizona Department of Mines and Mineral Resources
- Arizona Game and Fish Department

Local Government

- City of Yuma

Businesses

- Chaparral Guides and Outfitters
- Loren Pratt Farms
- Rivpa Land Resort
- Sakata Seed America, Inc.
- Seven Lakes Company

Special Interest Groups

- Arizona Cotton Growers Association
- Arizona Native Plant Society Conservation Committee
- Arizona Wilderness Coalition (AWC)
- Blythe Riding Club (Scoping Meeting Comment)
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Colorado River Board of California
- Forest Guardians
- La Cuna Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle Advisory Committee
- Pacific Legal Foundation
- Phoenix Zoo
- Quartzsite Historical Society
- Quartzsite Roadrunner Gem and Mineral Club
- Sierra Club
- Wilderness Society
- Wildlife Management Institute
- Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club

All comments received were reviewed and manually entered into an electronic database which enabled comments to be sorted several ways including by geography, type of issue, type of submitter (agency, individual, special interest group), and source of comment (comment card, email, letter, etc.). Each response often contained more than one comment or issue. It should be noted that 18 responses (10 percent of the 172 written responses), indicated only mailing list requests (to be added, change information, or be removed from the mailing list) and included no comments. Therefore, of the 207 total responses received during the scoping period (this total reflects both written comments and comments received at the scoping meetings), 189 contained comments. Within those 189 responses, 626 issues were identified. Because the same issue or comment was often reiterated or duplicated in other responses, an estimated 361 unique comments were received during the scoping period.

Table 2 shows the number of responses received from each state. In most instances, totals are reflected by state. Some communities within Arizona and California are listed separately for informational purposes. In total, 228 of the 433 total responses were received from outside of Arizona or California, accounting for approximately 53 percent of the total responses. Many of

these out-of-state responses can be attributed to the form letter. The City of Yuma submitted the most responses locally, accounting for 10 percent of all written responses.

TABLE 2 COMMENTS RECEIVED BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION		
Location	Number of Comments	Percent of Written Comments
Alaska	1	0.2
Arizona		
Parker	4	1.0
Phoenix	11	2.5
Prescott	5	1.1
Quartzsite	17	4.0
Tucson	12	2.8
Wellton	4	1.0
Yuma	43	10.0
Other	34	8.0
Arkansas	1	0.2
California		
Blythe/Palo Verde	7	1.5
Other	62	14.0
Colorado	9	2.0
Connecticut	8	1.8
District of Columbia	2	0.5
Florida	27	6.0
Georgia	6	1.4
Hawaii	3	0.7
Idaho	1	0.2
Illinois	16	3.7
Indiana	4	1.0
Iowa	5	1.1
Kansas	5	1.1
Kentucky	1	0.2
Louisiana	3	0.7
Maine	1	0.2
Maryland	6	1.4
Massachusetts	4	1.0
Michigan	1	0.2
Minnesota	4	1.0
Missouri	3	0.7
Montana	1	0.2
Nevada	3	0.7
New Hampshire	2	0.5
New Jersey	4	1.0
New Mexico	6	1.4
New York	16	3.7
North Carolina	2	0.5
Ohio	10	2.0
Oklahoma	2	0.5
Oregon	5	1.1
Pennsylvania	13	3.0

TABLE 2 COMMENTS RECEIVED BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION		
Location	Number of Comments	Percent of Written Comments
Rhode Island	3	0.7
South Carolina	2	0.5
South Dakota	1	0.2
Tennessee	4	1.0
Texas	20	5.0
Utah	1	0.2
Vermont	2	0.5
Virginia	5	1.1
Washington	11	2.5
Wisconsin	2	0.5
Wyoming	1	0.2
Not provided	6	1.0
FPO Armed Forces	1	0.2
TOTAL* (44 states + D.C. + FPO)	433	99.4**
*Total reflects written responses only and does not include totals for scoping meeting comments. **Due to rounding, total does not equal 100.		

2.3 ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING SCOPING

Introduction

Public comments received during the scoping period address a variety of resources and resource uses, as well as management considerations. Each comment letter was reviewed and individual comments within each letter were analyzed and separated into issue categories. Public comments and management concerns were separated into approximately 22 different issues, some of which were further separated into sub-issues in those instances when the volume and type of public comment within one general issue warranted separate discussion. For example, OHV use is a sub-issue under Transportation Planning and Access.

A number of public comments regarding how in general the area should be managed without reference to a particular resource or other issue were received. For example, numerous comments expressed a preference that the area be managed as it is currently with no changes. These comments were not placed within any issue category unless the comment addressed a particular resource. A “no action alternative” will be addressed as part of the EIS.

Each of the 22 issues identified below in Table 3 will be carried forward and considered further in the development of alternatives. The 22 issues identified during scoping are discussed in this section, which is organized as follows:

- Issue Summary – A general summary of this issue as reflected in public comment.

- **BLM Management Concerns** – These concerns may not have been identified by the public during scoping, but will be considered as issues to be addressed through the RMP/EIS. Decisions which have been evaluated and determined valid will be carried forward.
- **Agency and Tribal Concerns** – Comments provided by tribes and other agencies specific to the particular issue.
- **Planning Criteria** – Planning criteria relevant to this issue to be used in the development of the RMP/EIS.
- **Issues Addressed Administratively** – This sub-section only appears when public comments were received concerning this issue category. These issues will not be addressed in the RMP/EIS process as the issue is either addressed through current management and/or is currently being addressed by the YFO independent of this planning effort.
- **Issues Not Within BLM Jurisdiction** – This sub-section only appears when public comments were received concerning this issue category. These issues will not be addressed in the RMP/EIS process as the issue is either beyond the scope of the current plans or outside the authority of BLM.

Table 3, starting on the next page, provides an index of public comments by issue category that will be addressed through the RMP/EIS process. Table 3 is intended to provide an easy reference to the comments that will be addressed through the RMP/EIS process, by issue category. Individual comments are not repeated in the issue discussions to follow, which contain instead a summary of overall comments. The “total received” column in Table 3 indicates how many times within public comment a particular issue was raised. This number does not correlate directly with either the total number of scoping responses or the total number of unique comments within those responses, as each comment often contained several different issues. For example, one comment stated “limit OHV use as it impacts the quiet of the desert and causes introduction and spread of exotic plants, erosion, wildlife harassment, and destruction of cultural sites.” This single comment contained five different issues including transportation planning and access (OHV sub-issue), vegetation management, soils, fish and wildlife, and cultural resources. A full listing of all comments and responses received during the scoping period can be found in the comment summary table in Appendix B.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS BY ISSUE CATEGORY				
Issue No.	Issue	Sub-Issue (where applicable)	Public Issue/Comment	Total Received
1	Riparian Areas, Floodplains, and Wetlands		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Management should provide more emphasis on protection of riparian and wetland habitat. ■ Limit motorized uses to areas that avoid riparian areas. ■ The lower Colorado River corridor provides valuable wetland and riparian habitat. 	4
2	Soil, Water, and Air Quality		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OHV use causes erosion. ■ Protect water resources from overuse. ■ Include standards by which uses will be modified to prevent damage to soils, range, wildlife, and watersheds during drought. ■ Examine water availability/use in all watersheds to determine how much water is going to various uses and how much is left intact. Determine this prior to decisions for specific actions to ensure enough water is available for wildlife. ■ Address how water resources will be protected and enhanced. Specify best management practices. ■ Consider closing roads to mitigate effects of disruption to natural sheet flow of water, which changes vegetation and results in impacts to forage for Sonoran pronghorn. 	9
3	Vegetation Management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OHV use causes the spread of exotic plants and disrupts forage and native vegetation. ■ Do not allow application of herbicides or other toxicants, which would cause ecological harm. Instead, address root causes of land disturbances and noxious weeds (i.e., grazing). ■ Consider closing roads to mitigate effects of disruption to natural sheet flow of water, which changes vegetation and results in impacts to forage for Sonoran pronghorn. ■ Manage for more revegetation and controlled burns to control non-native species. ■ Use more controlled burns with revegetation of cottonwood and willow. ■ Area is important for native seed/plant resources and seed banking. ■ Determine desired future conditions for vegetation. ■ All land uses should limit growth of invasive plants. ■ Address how grazing impacts problem of invasive, nonnative vegetation. ■ Address problems droughts bring to vegetation management and establish protocols for livestock reduction during drought, including best management practices. ■ Consider rehabilitation after prescribed or wild fire, including special seed mix needs and noxious weed management. ■ Consumptive uses should be phased out. ■ Timber harvest/lumbering, developing natural resources is an important use of the land. ■ Maintaining species sustainability is BLM's responsibility regardless of district planning boundaries. 	25
4	Fish and Wildlife		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ OHV use harasses wildlife and causes habitat fragmentation. ■ Birds and animals thrive near agriculture, which provides food and water in a harsh desert environment. ■ Add planning criteria that recognizes importance of predators in native ecosystems. 	77

Note: Where comments apply to more than one issue category, the comment is repeated in the appropriate categories.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS BY ISSUE CATEGORY				
Issue No.	Issue	Sub-Issue (where applicable)	Public Issue/Comment	Total Received
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adopt strict policies against predator control and do not allow other agencies to lethally control predators. ■ Do not allow application of rodenticides or insecticides, as rodents play important roles and some wildlife depend on invertebrates for prey. ■ Preserve wildlife by building and maintaining water areas instead of closing access. ■ Continue efforts to enhance wildlife habitat. ■ Do not fence water holes, should be available to all animals including burros. ■ There should be no new guzzlers. ■ Address fragmentation of habitats from proposed development. ■ Address impacts to ground nesting birds from grazing. ■ Address impacts to birds and other wildlife from proposed wind towers. ■ Provide for wildlife corridors between YFO and PFO lands including Saddle Mountain, Woolsey Peak Wilderness, and Eagletails. ■ Scott's Lead Well off BLM 249 is often empty, and there are no other catchments for wildlife in the area. ■ Manage for maximum conservation and protection, and long-range goals to protect for future generations. ■ Maintaining species sustainability is BLM's responsibility regardless of district planning boundaries. 	
5	Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Sonoran pronghorn is being impacted by the proliferation of motorized routes. ■ There needs to be better protection for the flat-tailed horned lizard. ■ Consider Sonoran pronghorn for ACEC designation as it is threatened by livestock grazing, road construction, OHV use. ■ Designate Sonoran desert tortoise for ACEC as it is harmed by livestock grazing, OHV, other habitat destruction. ■ Analyze effects of roads on Sonoran pronghorn habitat. ■ Area maintains populations of desert bighorn sheep and other diminishing species, and the Eagletail Mountains WA is critical to the survivability of bighorns in other areas. ■ Address how future land uses will be managed so they don't contribute to the need for federal listing. 	36
6	Cultural and Paleontological Resources and Native American Issues		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concern with the protection of the Blythe Giant Intaglios and other geoglyphs along the Colorado River. ■ Sears Point needs to be protected, potentially by fencing. ■ OHV use causes destruction to cultural sites. ■ Values historic evidence of man's ancient and modern use in the area including intaglios, homestead sites, Patton's army sites, old mines, historic trails. ■ Management should record and protect cultural sites by signing, employee visits, volunteer/site steward monitoring, potentially fencing. ■ Management should protect cultural sites but still allow public access to them. ■ BLM should provide to the public a map of cultural resources in approved areas and keep it updated. 	33

Note: Where comments apply to more than one issue category, the comment is repeated in the appropriate categories.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS BY ISSUE CATEGORY				
Issue No.	Issue	Sub-Issue (where applicable)	Public Issue/Comment	Total Received
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Area has a special history for Native Americans. ■ Would like a stewardship program to help preserve cultural sites, potentially including fencing and limiting access. 	
7	Fire Management		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Roads created by OHV use increase risk of wildfire. ■ Manage for more revegetation and controlled burns to control non-native species. ■ Use more controlled burns with revegetation of cottonwood and willow. ■ Determine when and why prescribed burns will occur including a consideration for habitat, rehabilitation after prescribed or wild fire, special seed mix needs, and noxious weed management. ■ If fire is used, limit livestock use for two years. 	5
8	Hazardous Materials and Solid Waste		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Concerned about illegal dumping. 	4
9	Recreation	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ BLM should continue to allocate areas for camping (with and without RVs). ■ Keep LTVAs open. ■ Visitors enjoy viewing wildlife and hunting birds drawn by agriculture production. ■ Horseback riding and ATV use should not be in the same category because ATVs cause more damage. ■ Horse activities should not be limited to roads and washes. Should be allowed to ride on existing trails. ■ Squaw Lake boat parking area needs to be enlarged to provide an overflow area for parking and provisions for larger boats and travelers. ■ BLM-approved vendors who provide water, dumping, and RV repairs, etc. should have another way of advertising besides posting on a small, crowded message board. ■ Provide recreational and cultural opportunities at least cost. ■ Manage for multiple use. ■ Keep an area of the dunes for hiking only. ■ Clean up Hippy Hole and then turn it into a recreational campground. 	116
		Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Visitors should be educated about Native American culture, which would help prevent damage to cultural sites. ■ Public should be aware of public ownership of archaeological resources and what they are. ■ Provide educational opportunities so visitors can learn how to preserve and enjoy the land. ■ Staff with knowledgeable rangers who can teach people about the natural environment. ■ Land should be available for university to research native plants and cultural plants for treatment of diabetes. 	15
10	Visual Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Desire to maintain open spaces. 	35
11	Land Tenure and	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do not want to lose usage for more development in such places as Wellton Hills #1 and #2 and Coyote 	53

Note: Where comments apply to more than one issue category, the comment is repeated in the appropriate categories.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS BY ISSUE CATEGORY				
Issue No.	Issue	Sub-Issue (where applicable)	Public Issue/Comment	Total Received
	Use Authorizations		<p>Wash.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There should be no more disposals or exchanges. ■ Exchanges to benefit management should be explored. High wildlife values should be considered in exchanges. ■ Identify how the public will be involved in land transfers. ■ Disposals should be limited because they result in less protection to flora/fauna. They should only be considered for opportunities to consolidate federal lands or other land ownership patterns that facilitate management for flora/fauna. ■ Do not dispose or exchange lands that have Sonoran pronghorn or desert tortoise habitat. ■ Values land because they own a home and live on it. ■ Supports land exchange for Harvey's Fishing Hole. ■ Loss of agricultural leases can have a negative impact on local agricultural economy. ■ Agriculture on public land produces revenue for American people and reduces expenditure for other uses. ■ Agriculture is the best, most productive, and most judicious use of the land. ■ Agriculture is consistent with stated mission of BLM to sustain health, diversity, and productivity of public lands. ■ Agriculture meets FLPMA requirements that public lands be managed in a manner that recognizes nation's need for food and fiber from public lands. ■ Agriculture acts as a deterrent to illegal entry. If taken out of production it would revert to underbrush and salt cedars, complicating Border Patrol efforts to secure the area. ■ Limit future growth by maintaining natural surroundings and limiting development. ■ If public is denied use of land, then they aren't "public lands," they are really government-owned lands owned contrary to constitutional edict. ■ Land provides industrial expansion opportunities for landlocked towns. ■ Would like BLM land within Quartzsite town limits opened to development by the town. ■ Provide long-term leases to entities along the river like the Native Americans have been doing. ■ Some access is blocked by private holdings. 	
		Utility Corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify future utility corridors. There should be no amendments for future corridors. ■ Existing corridors should be used instead of new ones. 	1
12	Mineral Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mining is an important use for economic benefit. ■ Should be active oversight/control of mining. ■ Include alternatives with no new oil/gas leasing or only leasing than ensures resource health. ■ Include development of energy minerals and related issues, including the identification of future proposed mineral leasing areas and areas not suited. 	21

Note: Where comments apply to more than one issue category, the comment is repeated in the appropriate categories.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS BY ISSUE CATEGORY				
Issue No.	Issue	Sub-Issue (where applicable)	Public Issue/Comment	Total Received
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Timber harvest/lumbering, developing natural resources is an important use of the land. ■ Consumptive uses should be phased out. ■ Need restoration of mining and toxins (pond areas). ■ Increase public allotment of gravel from 250 to 500 pounds. 	
13	Transportation Planning and Access	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How will BLM address route designations for areas with wilderness characteristics, ACECs, and other areas with special resources? ■ Opposed to further closure of public land through road closure or wilderness designation. ■ Due to access closures, it has become difficult for individuals to enjoy public lands. ■ Access should not be changed or further limited and roads, trails, and washes should remain open to vehicles. ■ Reopen historic routes and roads, which have been closed, to old mines or ranches. ■ There should be no new roads. ■ Need route designation to manage routes created by illegal immigrants and lack of designation. ■ There is no point in preserving area if people can't access it to enjoy it. ■ Open access to all areas designated as wilderness or monument. ■ Reopen inland route between Sears and Independence Points. ■ Reopen river route between Sears Point-Independence Point-Howard Well-Aztec I-8 interchange. ■ In Red Cloud Mine area, reopen road between Black Rock-Red Cloud Wash and Arasta Wash. ■ In California, reopen roads between Ogilby Road and State Hwy. 78 to the river. The recreational benefit of these roads was not assessed prior to their closure. ■ Plan routes for different modes of recreation (i.e., so trail bikes don't conflict with cars). ■ YFO should adopt a "closed unless posted open" OHV policy effective immediately and remaining during RMP revision. 	153
		OHV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The use of OHV is the best and sometimes only way to enjoy remote areas, especially for older or disabled people. ■ Limit 4WD and ATVs to only certain roads and washes, and the sand dunes because they damage the roads. ■ Complete OHV route designation process and have a mix of areas closed to OHV use and limited to designated roads and trails. ■ Identify OHV management policies and required signing and enforcement. ■ Due to sensitive ecosystems and soils, should be no open OHV areas within planning unit. ■ Limit OHV use as it impacts quiet, causes spread of exotic plants, erosion, wildlife harassment/fragmentation, destruction of cultural sites, disruption of foraging and native vegetation, increase in risk 	61

Note: Where comments apply to more than one issue category, the comment is repeated in the appropriate categories.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS BY ISSUE CATEGORY				
Issue No.	Issue	Sub-Issue (where applicable)	Public Issue/Comment	Total Received
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of wildfire, impacts to Sonoran pronghorn and desert tortoise habitat. ■ Concerned with OHV tracks along existing roads because their wheel width doesn't conform to ruts made by standard vehicles. ■ All areas with wilderness characteristics should be managed under "closed" OHV designation. ■ It isn't the OHVs that destroy the desert, it's only a small percentage of the users. 	
14	Airspace		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Need to develop at least one landing strip along the lower Colorado River for pilots to land in proximity to recreation uses. BLM could also attract developers for small airport. ■ Yuma Proving Grounds (YPG) needs to be protected from air encroachment. Pilots fly illegally in YPG airspace and land on their property because there is no designated airstrip. 	3
15	Grazing Use		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Grazing is an important use for economic benefit. ■ Because grazing has been administered by PFO, coordination with that office regarding any allotment changes is warranted. ■ Grazing impacts Sonoran pronghorn and Sonoran desert tortoise habitat. ■ Include full range of alternatives including no grazing, grazing at current use, and grazing reductions to ensure wildlife, watershed, vegetative, and soil health. ■ Eliminate domestic grazing. ■ Address impacts to ground nesting birds from grazing. ■ Address grazing allotment plans and residual forage standards, stocking rates, grazing intensity, duration, timing, class of livestock, strategies to reduce grazing, if necessary. ■ Establish protocols for livestock reduction during drought, including best management practices. ■ Reference all pertinent guidelines in grazing plans. ■ Address how grazing impacts problem of invasive, non-native vegetation. ■ Because grazing has been administered by PFO, coordination with that office regarding any allotment changes is warranted. 	19
16	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In identifying wilderness characteristics, consider how protecting or managing for these characteristics will help previously impacted areas be restored to natural condition. ■ Identify lands with wilderness character and protect them with special administrative designation and management and through a framework of multiple use conservation areas to preserve them. ■ Preserving wilderness characteristics is best economic choice as it is less costly than development, maintenance, restoration, law enforcement of OHV, or restoration. ■ Arizona Wilderness Coalition (AWC) will be submitting proposals for lands containing wilderness characteristics for inclusion in EIS. ■ Use definition of wilderness as outlined in Wilderness Act of 1964 for inventorying areas for wilderness characteristics. 	71

Note: Where comments apply to more than one issue category, the comment is repeated in the appropriate categories.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS BY ISSUE CATEGORY				
Issue No.	Issue	Sub-Issue (where applicable)	Public Issue/Comment	Total Received
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All areas with wilderness characteristics should be managed under “closed” OHV designation. ■ Consider following areas for wilderness characteristics: BLM lands adjacent to Kofa NWR WAs, Columbus Peak, Cortez Peak, all areas adjacent to existing YFO WAs. ■ Do not degrade wilderness characteristics in course of implementing any management action through the RMP without first analyzing possibility that they exist. ■ Managing for wilderness characteristics creates new wilderness without congressional approval and in violation of congressional intent. ■ Management of WSAs should ensure protection of their wilderness values from destructive activities such as oil/gas development, logging, OHV, mining, etc. ■ How will BLM work with the conservation community on implementing a monitoring and restoration plan? 	
17	Special Area Designations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How will BLM address route designations for areas with wilderness characteristics, ACECs, and other areas with special resources? ■ Find all potential WAs and designate accordingly. ■ Protect lands with wilderness character with special administrative designation and management and through a framework of multiple use conservation areas to preserve them. ■ Include assessment of additional ACECs in planning criteria to provide protection for sensitive plants/wildlife, including assessment of all state/federally listed species for ACEC designation. ■ Consider Sonoran pronghorn for ACEC designation as it is threatened by livestock grazing, road construction, OHV use. ■ Designate Sonoran desert tortoise for ACEC as it is harmed by livestock grazing, OHV, other habitat destruction. ■ Designation as wilderness would encourage a broader public attitude towards stewardship, usage, and interaction with land. ■ Designating WAs will only benefit the few who are fit enough to hike into remote areas. ■ Norton’s April 2003 settlement was unlawful and FLPMA gives BLM the authority to create Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). ■ Protection of wilderness quality lands can help fill mandates of FLPMA and provides a better balance of multiple uses as only 2.6 percent of BLM land is currently protected as wilderness. ■ Consider supplemental values such as Sonoran pronghorn habitat, cultural sites, T&E species, unique plant assemblages, prehistoric/historic travel corridors, water resources, potential scientific sites, education, and scenic beauty. ■ Designate the river corridor as a natural resource area, wildlife habitat, ACEC, etc. rather than general use/recreation area. 	65

Note: Where comments apply to more than one issue category, the comment is repeated in the appropriate categories.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS BY ISSUE CATEGORY				
Issue No.	Issue	Sub-Issue (where applicable)	Public Issue/Comment	Total Received
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do not need further wilderness designation as there are numerous other WAs available for people to visit. ■ Open access to all areas designated as wilderness or monument. ■ Should be no wilderness management prescriptions outside of designated wilderness. ■ Protect current ACECs from land uses that conflict with their values (oil/gas, grazing, OHV). 	
18	Environmental Justice		No comments were received for this issue.	0
19	Socioeconomics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Without protecting local wilderness, local residents in the region could lose the income provided by ecotourism to the area. ■ Loss of agricultural leases can have a negative impact on local agricultural economy. ■ Agriculture on public land produces revenue for American people and reduces expenditure for other uses. ■ Analysis should include consideration of economic benefits to local and regional economy through wildlife-related recreation and ecosystems services. ■ Analysis should consider economic drain of livestock grazing on federal agency and taxpayer money including cost of damage caused by non-native organisms introduced by grazing or oil/gas development. ■ Preserving wilderness characteristics is best economic choice as it is less costly than development, maintenance, restoration, law enforcement of OHV or restoration. ■ User fees only hurt the poor, people shouldn't have to pay to use their own land. ■ Develop plan in coordination with AGFD to acknowledge economic value of wildlife species to local economies. 	12
20	Law Enforcement (including Public Safety)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Need more prosecution and fining of violators, such as for illegal dumping. ■ There should be more employees or rangers to stop illegal dumping, vandalism, and illegal entry. Additional rangers especially needed during the crowded months of January and February. ■ Use other people to police dump stations and trash so the rangers can do their jobs. ■ Provide list of rules on camping and ATV riding regionally in gas stations, restaurants, grocery stores, etc. to keep people on trails and make rules more accessible. ■ Use "do not litter" campaigns to help prevent illegal dumping. ■ Will BLM work with other law enforcement agencies to address border issues? 	29
21	Border Issues and Undocumented Immigrants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Migration across the border has created challenges to the protection of natural resources. ■ Will other agencies be mandated to consult with BLM and USFWS on environmental impacts as a result of their actions on the border? ■ Immigrants are causing undesignated travel routes. ■ Agriculture acts as a deterrent to illegal entry. If taken out of production, it would revert to underbrush and salt cedars and complicate Border Patrol efforts to secure the area. 	29

Note: Where comments apply to more than one issue category, the comment is repeated in the appropriate categories.

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS BY ISSUE CATEGORY				
Issue No.	Issue	Sub-Issue (where applicable)	Public Issue/Comment	Total Received
22	Wild Horses and Burros		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Management should include an emphasis on wild horse/burro control. ■ Water holes should be available to burros. ■ Remove all wild horses and burros. 	3

Note: Where comments apply to more than one issue category, the comment is repeated in the appropriate categories.

Issue 1: Riparian Areas, Floodplains, and Wetlands

Public Issue Summary

Few public comments were received on this issue. Those that were received pertained to the protection of riparian and wetlands in general and from motorized uses. Importance was also placed on the wetland and riparian habitat along the lower Colorado River corridor.

BLM Management Concerns

- Control invasive species in riparian zones and wetlands.
- Manage water quality and contaminants.
- Manage for wildlife habitat for neotropical migratory birds.
- Implement recovery plans in rivers and riparian areas while managing fuels, fires, and exotics.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Tribe indicated an interest in continuation of cottonwood and willow pole planting habitat improvement projects.

Planning Criteria

Riparian areas, floodplains, and wetlands will be managed to protect, maintain, or improve existing functions to benefit water storage, groundwater recharge, water quality, and fish and wildlife values in appropriate locations within fiscal constraints. All management practices will be designed in accordance with the Clean Water Act, Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), Colorado River Floodway Protection Act, and Arizona's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. Proposed decisions will be measured against the Arizona Standard for Rangeland Health for riparian areas, floodplains, wetlands and priority wildlife management areas that provide for biodiversity and protection and restoration of native species. Additional criteria are the Lower Colorado River Multiple Species Conservation Plan (LCRMSCP), priority wildlife habitat management areas, existing activity plans, and the current Lower Colorado River Fire Management Plan.

Issues Addressed Administratively

- Tribes want to continue being involved in cottonwood and willow pole planting habitat improvement projects.

Issue 2: Soil, Water, and Air Quality

Public Issue Summary

Public issues focused on the protection and availability of water resources. Overuse of water was mentioned, as was allocation of water to various uses and adequacy of water supply for wildlife. Concern over the impact of drought to soil and water resources was mentioned, as was the contribution of roads and OHV use to erosion problems.

BLM Management Concerns

- Consider the effect of public uses on air quality, particularly the use of dirt roads with regard to PM₁₀ non-attainment areas.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

No agency or tribal concerns were mentioned for this issue category.

Planning Criteria

Soil - Soils will be managed to protect long-term productivity. Best management practices will be incorporated into other programs to minimize soil erosion and compaction resulting from management actions.

Water Quality - Section 319 of the Clean Water Act obligates federal agencies to be consistent with State Nonpoint Source Management Program Plans and relevant water quality standards. Section 313 requires compliance with State Water Quality Standards. BLM will coordinate with the State of Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) regarding their Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program and other relevant water quality programs. BLM will incorporate applicable best management practices or other conservation measures for specific programs and activities into the RMP. Water quality will be maintained or improved in accordance with state and federal standards.

Air Quality – Maintain and enhance air quality and visibility in a manner consistent with the Clean Air Act. Under the Clean Air Act, BLM administered lands were given a Class II air quality classification unless reclassified by the State. Wilderness areas must be classified as Class I or Class II. This classification allows moderate deterioration associated with moderate, well-controlled industrial and population growth. Proposed decisions within the influence zone of the planning project that may affect non-attainment areas, including the Maricopa and Yuma Counties particulate matter of 10 microns (PM₁₀) non-attainment areas, will be assessed for conformance with air quality standards.

Issue 3: Vegetation Management

Public Issue Summary

Many of the concerns expressed by public comment focused on the spread of exotic and non-native plants from a variety of land uses including OHV use, roads, and grazing. Comments also stated that the area is valuable for seed banking and resources. Other concerns focused on the application of herbicides, and various impacts from grazing, drought, and fire management.

BLM Management Concerns

- Establish guidelines for project level work to be completed in accordance with the Arizona Native Plant Law.
- Determine if vegetative products within the 2-5 inch of precipitation zone are suitable for public use or sale (e.g., firewood, cactus skeletons, native wood/plants).
- Determine if there should be campfire restrictions for the protection of native vegetation.
- Determine decision criteria for revegetation and availability of irrigation water for revegetation.
- Continue to identify, map, and treat invasive species, including noxious weeds, as a management priority within the planning area.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Continue giant salvinia removal along the Colorado River.

Planning Criteria

Vegetation will be managed to achieve desired plant communities (considering the ecological site potential) that provide for biodiversity; protection and restoration of native species; and non-consumptive uses including plant protection (fuel collection), visual quality, and watershed protection. FLPMA requires that public lands be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. The desired plant communities will provide critical wildlife habitat, as well as forage for livestock and wildlife. Plant maintenance, watershed protection and stability, and wildlife habitat needs will be provided for. Forage will be allocated to support wildlife at population levels determined through consultation with the AGFD. Forage on suitable rangeland will be allocated for domestic livestock grazing based on Arizona's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration and may include provisions for hazardous fuels reduction and habitat restoration.

There are several treatment methods and Standard Operating Procedures that would be used in a vegetation treatment program. BLM policies and guidance for public land treatments would be followed in implementing all treatment methods. Many guidelines are provided in manual

Section 1740, BLM Arizona's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, Programmatic documents such as BLM's *Final Environmental Impact Statement, Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States* (May 1991), and other general and specific program policy, procedures, and standards pertinent to implementation of renewable resource improvements.

Issues Addressed Administratively

- Add planning criterion that requires all alternatives be biologically and ecologically sustainable and meets the needs of native plants/wildlife.

Issue 4: Fish and Wildlife

Public Issue Summary

Fish and wildlife issues included impacts and habitat fragmentation from OHV use and development. Impacts to wildlife, specifically ground nesting birds and forage, from grazing was also mentioned. Several comments were received regarding water catchments, including the desire that these be managed by BLM, concern that there are not enough catchments, and concern that some catchments are sometimes empty and others are fenced, making them unavailable for use by all wildlife. A few comments emphasized the benefit of agriculture to wildlife for food resources, and one comment expressed concern over policies to control predators and rodents. There were also requests to provide wildlife corridors between this planning area and adjacent areas.

BLM Management Concerns

- Identify what indicators or limits of acceptable change will be used to determine when wildlife populations are being impacted to an unacceptable degree.
- Integrate habitat management with other resource programs to minimize impacts on wildlife species and their habitats while still providing for other uses on the public lands.
- Evaluate the use of wildlife water catchments.
- Determine what types of management actions are appropriate in priority and general wildlife habitats.
- Identify appropriate mitigation measures for impacts to priority wildlife habitats.
- Incorporate State and Bureau strategic plans for fish and wildlife into the RMP.
- Assess potential need and proper location for artificial fish habitat.
- Protect backwater habitat.
- Promote native fish habitat populations.
- Assess the need to limit or close public access to promote spawning or critical fish habitat.

- Address best management practices for aquatic non-native invasive species removal within fish habitat.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Continue managing for wildlife values.
- There should be more proactive wildlife management.
- AGFD would like to develop, review, and coordinate on RMP with BLM.
- Activities of the AGFD to maintain and enhance wildlife resources and related recreation should be considered necessary, authorized, and administrative activities in any land use allocation.
- AGFD supports a balanced approach in management to provide both conservation and recreational use opportunities.

Planning Criteria

Fish and wildlife habitat will be managed to maintain and/or improve the existing habitats including priority wildlife habitat. Management actions should minimize the extent of disturbance to fish and wildlife habitat. Vegetation management practices would be considered to achieve desired future conditions. In addition, management actions will incorporate existing BLM national strategic plans, such as Fish and Wildlife 2000 and others.

Issues Addressed Administratively

- Add planning criterion that requires all alternatives be biologically and ecologically sustainable and meets the needs of native plants/wildlife.
- Management should include close coordination with USFWS, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), AGFD.
- Ensure the RMP includes recognition of the Lower Colorado River Multiple Species Conservation Program (LCRMSCP) and BLM is a member of that planning process.
- BLM should manage the land and AGFD should manage the wildlife including hunting.
- Cooperative habitat improvements projects should continue between BLM and AGFD.

Issues Not Within of BLM Jurisdiction

- BLM should take over management of the water catchments.

Issue 5: Threatened, Endangered, and Special Status Species

Public Issue Summary

Comments received for this issue focused on the Sonoran pronghorn, Sonoran desert tortoise, desert bighorn sheep, and flat-tailed horned lizard. Impacts from OHV use, roads, and grazing was mentioned. It was requested that the Sonoran pronghorn and desert tortoise habitat be designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). General comments stated that the area should be managed to prevent future federal listings of species and include rigorous monitoring of sensitive species.

BLM Management Concerns

- Identify the types of projects that are appropriate within special status species habitat.
- Identify the types of mitigation that should be considered for special status species protection.
- Determine if designation of potential, suitable, and occupied Southwestern willow flycatcher habitat is necessary to protect species.
- Implement and incorporate recovery plans and conservation agreements and their goals, objectives, and actions, as applicable, into the RMP.
- Implement recovery and conservation plans for special status species through management practices.
- Actions, allocations, special designations, and prescriptions will be utilized as needed to protect designated T&E species critical habitat.
- Consider impacts to razorback sucker critical habitat.
- Explore reintroduction of Gila topminnow, desert pupfish, razorback sucker, and bonytail chub.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Continue T&E species management.

Planning Criteria

Laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines followed for special status species management will include, but are not limited to, Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, BLM Manual 6840, Desert Bighorn Sheep Range Wide Plan and Sonoran Desert Tortoise Range Wide Plan, Endangered Species Act, Executive Order 13112, FLPMA, NEPA, Public Rangelands Improvements Act, Sikes Act, and the Taylor Grazing Act.

Management actions authorized, funded or implemented by BLM will be done so as not to jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed threatened or endangered plant or animal

species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. Candidate species, species proposed for federal listing, and BLM and State sensitive species will be given the same consideration as listed species. The intent is to recover listed species and maintain healthy populations of all other species and therefore avoid the need for further listing of any species as threatened or endangered.

In addition, BLM adheres to BLM's Manual 6840, which outlines the conservation management procedures of threatened and endangered species and the habitat on which they depend; ensures that all actions that BLM authorizes, funds, or implements comply with the Endangered Species Act; requires cooperation with the USFWS in the planning and recovery of threatened and endangered species; states the BLM policy for managing special status candidate species. BLM also will follow terms and conditions implemented by Biological Opinions and Conservation Agreements when making special status species management decisions.

Issues Addressed Administratively

- Add planning criterion that requires all alternatives to meet ESA and other protection statutes and include rigorous monitoring of sensitive species.
- Will other agencies be mandated to consult with BLM and USFWS on environmental impacts as a result of their actions on the border?

Issue 6: Cultural and Paleontological Resources, and Native American Concerns

Public Issue Summary

The cultural value, importance, and interest of the area were frequently mentioned in public comments. Cultural features specifically mentioned include the intaglios, geoglyphs, old homestead sites, old mines, Patton's army sites, Sears Point, and historic trails. These features were discussed in the context of general importance as well as being interesting recreation destinations. Many comments mentioned protection of cultural features, but some comments suggested measures such as fencing cultural sites while others expressed a desire for protection without closing public access. OHV use was specifically mentioned as impacting cultural sites. Volunteers and site stewards were also suggested as protection measures.

BLM Management Concerns

- Establish measures needed to protect cultural resources from vandalism, OHV damage, other uses, and natural deterioration.
- Identify trade/exchange lands that BLM will attempt to acquire in order to protect significant cultural resources.
- Identify and evaluate areas containing or likely to contain vertebrate or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils.

- Determine sensitivity of paleontological resources prior to authorizing surface disturbing activities.
- Develop management recommendations to promote the scientific, educational, and recreational uses of fossils.
- Identify and mitigate threats to paleontological resources, as appropriate.
- Establish link between former RMP and current RMP for proper name to reference Sears Point/Gila River Cultural ACEC.
- Determine how to effectively manage increasing cultural heritage tourism while protecting cultural resources.
- Consider decisions that will protect areas with traditional cultural significance to Native American Tribes.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Establish a host site at Sears Point (Gila River Cultural ACEC) for cultural resource protection.
- Continue protection of historic and cultural sites.

Planning Criteria

Cultural and paleontological resources will be managed to maintain or enhance significant scientific, educational, and recreational values. Cultural sites that meet National Register criteria will be protected and nominated for inclusion on the Register.

Issue 7: Fire Management

Public Issue Summary

There were few public comments received regarding this issue. Comments focused primarily on how and where prescriptive burns would be used, and how the area would be revegetated including special seed mixes and noxious weed control. Concern was expressed that roads increase the risk of wildfire and that livestock should not be allowed in a burn area for two years following a fire.

BLM Management Concerns

Management concerns will be identified during the Management Situation Analysis phase.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Several agencies indicated an interest in future projects related to hazardous fuel reduction and wildfire suppression.
- Support continuation of programs for hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire suppression and prevention, and removal of salt cedar.

Planning Criteria

Fire management prescriptions will be consistent with the Federal Wildland Fire Policy, National Fire Plan, and the Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management. Fire suppression will be accomplished with the least amount of surface disturbance and to protect significant cultural or paleontological values. Public lands and resources affected by fire will be rehabilitated in accordance with the multiple use objectives identified for the affected area, subject to BLM policies and available funding.

Issue 8: Hazardous Materials and Solid Waste

Public Issue Summary

Public comments received on this issue related to trash and RV septic waste. One issue involved RVs unloading their septic tanks on the land. Other comments were received regarding the need to clean up and better maintain the confluence and problems with illegal dumping. All of these issues can be addressed through current management.

BLM Management Concerns

- Consider risk to visitors and general public from unlocated unexploded ordnances on public lands administered by YFO.
- Work with adjacent military installations to consider what management actions are needed to protect public safety.
- Identify and consider safety issues at historic mine sites, which are often popular visitor destinations.
- Consider appropriate management of sites and areas that pose a threat to public health and safety, whether man-made or natural.
- Address abandoned mine lands and emptying of septic tanks on BLM land.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Control illegal dumping and hazardous materials.

Planning Criteria

Management actions will consider best management practices, which protect the public to the greatest extent through existing policies. Laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines followed for hazardous materials will include, but not be limited to FLPMA, NEPA, and the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act of 1986.

The plan will develop a framework to address hazardous sites and activities, incorporating requirements to meet the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other environmental laws and regulations, as well as consider other potential hazards.

The YFO will seek out developing a Memorandum of Understanding with USMC Air Station at Yuma and U.S. Army Yuma Proving Grounds to address safe disposal of any unexploded ordnance discovered on public lands.

Issues Addressed Administratively

- RVs dump their tanks on the land creating a biohazard and fly infestation.
- There is a problem with illegal dumping at 29E where the old dairy was.
- The confluence needs to be cleaned up and maintained in a safe fashion.

Issue 9: Recreation

Public Issue Summary

Due to the nature of the questions provided by BLM on the comment card and comment form, many people relayed what they felt the most important recreation activities were on BLM land. These recreation uses include hunting, OHV and other motorized use, camping, rock hunting/collecting, fishing, photography, hiking, wildlife viewing, scientific research (geologic research, in particular, was mentioned), shooting, and many other uses. Comments were received indicating the need to maintain a multiple use management approach.

Other recreation comments were received regarding the need to maintain camping areas, including the LTVAs. Several comments were received on horse riding trails and the belief that horse riders should not be limited in the trails they can ride, a preference both for and against shooting in the area, and requests for trails designated for certain uses. Squaw Lake boat ramp and Hippy Hole were specifically mentioned for improvements or additional amenities. Comments also stated that there should be no fees for the use of public land.

Education was also mentioned in comments. People felt that access to the area and its wildlife and habitat provided important educational opportunities for themselves and future generations. Comments also emphasized the importance of educating visitors about the area to encourage stewardship and appreciation of the land. Several comments were received about the scientific

research and learning opportunities offered by the area, particularly for seed resources and geology.

BLM Management Concerns

- Identify and allocate sites to scientific, recreational, educational, and traditional uses.
- Identify sites for development of interpretive uses.
- Evaluate the recreational potential at Gilmore's and Walter's camps.
- Review new special recreation permits and concession leases and vendor permits for feasibility and consistency with existing land use plans.
- BLM management plan will consider establishing designated routes for a wide variety of recreational use (e.g., hiking, biking, equestrian, and OHV).
- Determine if there should be campfire restrictions.
- Identify methods for joint management and funding for recreational resources and maintenance of existing programs.
- Shortfalls in funding may jeopardize ability to develop and manage new and existing recreation resources.
- Examine management opportunities utilizing BLM recreational strategy.
- Examine ways to minimize potential conflicts between motorized and non-motorized recreational users.
- Consider management of commercial recreational uses, special recreation permits, and other organized events.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Concerns were expressed regarding changes in recreational sites location and status with regard to state highway access and improvement and proximity to national wildlife refuges.

Planning Criteria

Laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines followed for recreation management will include, but not be limited to, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Land and Water Conservation Fund, 43 CFR 8300, BLM Recreation Management regulations, 43 CFR 2930, BLM Special Recreation Permits regulations, BLM Manual 8300 – Recreation Management, and the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration.

The RMP/EIS will set forth a framework for managing recreational and commercial activities in order to maintain existing natural landscapes and to provide for the enjoyment and safety of the visiting public. The lifestyles of area residents, including activities of grazing, hunting, and motorized use and recreation, will be considered in the plan.

Existing designated recreation sites would be carried forward and evaluated for additional facilities. Other public lands would also be evaluated for their suitability for recreational development.

Issues Addressed Administratively

- Permits for horse rides should be issued at least two weeks before a ride instead of at the last minute.
- There should be no fees for use of public land.

Issues Not Within BLM Jurisdiction

- Minimize use by gun enthusiasts.
- Hunters disrupt quiet of area.
- Lands should remain open to all legal shooting in Arizona including use of legally owned Class III weapons.

Issue 10: Visual Resources

Public Issue Summary

Comments regarding visual resources specifically were very limited. However, numerous comments expressed an appreciation and value for the open spaces and scenery of the area, and the desire that the open spaces and beauty of the area be maintained for the enjoyment of both current and future generations.

BLM Management Concerns

- VRM classification needs to be re-evaluated for the entire field office with emphasis on special designation areas.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Consider closing areas to camping near National Wildlife Refuge to reduce visual impact.

Planning Criteria

Visual Resource Management classification will be conducted to address the public's concerns about open space and natural vistas. Some areas may be subject to special measures to protect resources or reduce conflicts among uses.

Issue 11: Land Tenure and Use Authorizations

Public Issue Summary

Numerous comments were received regarding land tenure and use authorizations and generally covered one of three categories: (1) general policy regarding disposal or exchange, (2) support for disposal, exchange, or lease of specific areas, and (3) agricultural use. Many comments expressed concern over further disposals or exchanges, requesting no further or only limited disposals or exchanges. Some comments stated that wildlife and habitat be considered during potential land exchanges. Specific areas mentioned for disposal/exchange or lease include Harvey's Fishing Hole, Martinez Lake, area along the Colorado River, and BLM land within Quartzsite town limits. Several comments were received supporting agricultural use in the area for a variety of reasons and expressing concern over potential termination of agricultural leases.

One response discussed utility corridors and expressed a need for future utility corridors to be identified in the plan, but that there should be no amendments for future corridors. The comment also stated that existing corridors should be used instead of new ones.

BLM Management Concerns

- Determine if existing and proposed corridors are consistent with the Western Utility Group Corridor Study.
- Determine if the YFO corridors align/coordinate with adjacent BLM field office corridors, and if corridors do not align, develop mitigation recommendations.
- Identify BLM's role in educating the public about major utility corridors.
- Determine presence or absence of Desert Land Entries in YFO, including Indian allotments.
- Assess lands for disposal, acquisition, and/or exchange to benefit or promote T&E and/or cultural resources.
- Evaluate appropriate locations for R&PP leases based on community and local needs.
- Identify need for establishing additional communication sites.
- Review all land classification/withdrawals within YFO.
- Identify any and all trespass on public lands for management action. Determine how trespass will be addressed.
- Coordinate with minerals assessment to ensure any and all split estate issues are resolved.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Review all agricultural lease stipulations in order to consider selection of crop types for law enforcement and public safety.
- Review requests for potential expansion of existing military installations. Evaluate in-holdings within YPG and BMGR
- Evaluate all land tenure adjustments, including those adjacent to wildlife refuges and military installations.
- Consider land use authorizations to support future military training exercises.
- Evaluate compatibility and location of proposed wind farms with military air traffic.
- Consider needs for military communication sites.
- Concerns were expressed regarding Gila River Confluence ownership and coordination with multiple agencies.

Planning Criteria

Realty/Land Tenure – Conditions will be identified that warrant the removal or withdrawal of certain public lands from multiple use, such as for public safety or protection of special uses and resources. Withdrawals designate public lands for a particular project, purpose or use. Normally, the land is closed to entry under all or some of the public land laws including the mining law. Criteria for identifying lands available or not available for land entry, including under the Desert Land Entry Act, will be developed. There will be no net loss of lands or interests in lands along the Colorado River. YFO will follow recommendations of Communication Site Management Plans, National Wind EIS, and BLM Instructional Memoranda.

Land Use Authorizations – Public lands will generally be available for concessions, leases, and rights-of-way including but not limited to transportation and utility corridors, subject to NEPA evaluation, except where specifically prohibited by law or regulation or in areas specifically identified for avoidance or exclusion to protect significant resource values. Land use authorizations are to avoid areas of special management areas and designations such as priority wildlife habitat, special status species management areas, ACECs, wilderness, and cultural areas.

Renewable Energy Sites — New renewable energy sites, including wind, biomass, and solar energy, will be considered based on established criteria, procedures, and policy, in association with industry demand and resource protection objectives. New locations for renewable energy sites will also consider environmental quality, economic efficiency, security, safety, and good engineering and technological practices. Decisions will consider preferred locations and exclusion areas to protect significant resource values.

Issues Addressed Administratively

- Pratt agricultural lease is valuable part of hybrid seed program and is one of few locations in Southwest that can produce Tropical Cauliflower.

Issues Not Within BLM Jurisdiction

- More land should be opened along Martinez Lake for boat ramps, long-term home leases, camping, and concessionaires.

Issue 12: Mineral Resources

Public Issue Summary

Comments received on this issue either supported or opposed mining and resource development. Issues included statements that mining and development of natural resources are economically important. Others comments stated that there should be more oversight of mining, some alternatives should include no new oil/gas leases, there needs to be restoration of mining and related toxins, and all consumptive uses should be phased out.

BLM Management Concerns

- Determine mineral potential and evaluate areas to consider for mineral withdrawal.
- Determine if currently withdrawn areas should be opened to mineral entry.
- Identify areas of low, medium, and high potential for oil and gas development.
- Determine areas that should be closed to oil and gas leasing due to resource compatibility and sensitivity.
- Develop reasonable foreseeable development scenario for oil, gas, mineral material sales, and mining law as needed to support community infrastructure and growth.
- Follow directives within the Energy, Policy and Conservation Act (2000).
- Evaluate socioeconomic impacts of sand and gravel material sales and statewide need for sand and gravel material sales within YFO. Promote competitive sand and gravel award process.
- BLM will utilize other management methods to avoid surface management.
- Coordinate with minerals assessment to ensure any and all split estate issues are resolved. Ensure that sub-surface jurisdictional issues surrounding split estate parcels are addressed.
- Formulate management strategy for trespass violations.
- Mining claim use and occupancy authorizations should be considered as directed by 43 CFR 3715.
- Determine policy for management of split estate lands, particularly where BLM manages the surface but the sub-surface is in non-federal ownership.
- Consider general requirements for protecting resource values of the public lands, including stipulations and construction and/or operating standards to apply to surface disturbing activities.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Evaluate mineral material sales, which support state highway improvement projects. Mineral resources provide important benefits to society and the economy. Ensure adequate mineral assessment and economic evaluation.

Planning Criteria

Minerals management will be consistent with the General Mining Law of 1872 (as amended), FLPMA, Mining and Minerals Policy Act, National Materials and Minerals Policy, Research and Development Act, and current BLM mineral resources policy. Lands open to salable, leasable, and locatable minerals will be identified in the plan. Areas within the planning area may also be subject to constraints to surface use.

Issue 13: Transportation Planning and Access

Public Issue Summary

Many public comments were received regarding transportation planning and access. A frequently stated issue was access with many users preferring no further restrictions through road closures or wilderness designation. Another issue was the request for currently closed roads to be reopened. Other issues include a desire for route designation to manage routes created by lack of designation and illegal immigrants, the belief that public land should be publicly accessible, and the hope that current access will remain for future generations to enjoy the land. Other comments requested that there be no new roads established.

Issues with OHV use include damage to natural resources, wildlife, cultural resources, and existing roads; lack of designation; lack of signing and enforcement; and the need to limit OHV to certain or designated areas. OHV supporters feel that OHV is the only way to enjoy remote areas, especially for older or disabled users.

BLM Management Concerns

- A route signing policy needs to be established.
- Determine management actions needed for new routes, including but not limited to use specifications, signing, vegetation management, and routine maintenance.
- Determine if YFO designated routes align and coordinate with adjacent BLM field offices and other adjacent jurisdictions.
- Identify BLM's role in educating the public about and managing designated route systems.
- Determine what level of maintenance should be provided on roads to maintain access and to protect both public safety and natural and cultural resources.

- Address access, easements, or rights-of-way across private lands in order to secure access to public lands.
- Consider providing additional motorized access for those who are unable to walk long distances.
- Consider how types of vehicle uses, including competitive events, races, and challenge courses should be managed.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Coordinate proposed location of recreational hiking trails on or around Telegraph Pass.
- Consider proper placement of OHV designated routes near national wildlife refuges.
- Resolve illegal use and entry of OHV from BLM routes to national wildlife refuge.
- AGFD recognizes need to assess travel routes in key areas due to impacts to wildlife by OHV use and habitat fragmentation by roadways.
- AGFD wants to be involved during route planning/designating process to identify important areas for fish and wildlife resources and ensure appropriate access for wildlife-related recreation.
- Incorporate transportation needs into planning process.
- Would like to see land remain open to public use without extensive restrictions.

Planning Criteria

BLM will manage motorized and other access on the public lands in accordance with existing law, executive orders, regulation, and policy. Road and trail access guidance will be incorporated into every RMP to ensure public and resource needs are met. The YFO will designate OHV use areas as open, closed, or limited use. A network of roads and trails will be designated for all limited areas. BLM will utilize route evaluation tree as adopted by the Arizona State Office. This process will require an interdisciplinary approach as it affects several key resources. BLM will strive to coordinate route designations with surrounding jurisdictions and neighboring field offices.

Issues Not Within BLM Jurisdiction

- In KOFA, reopen Slumgullion Pass and road from Queen Canyon to Willbanks Road.
- Remove or unlock gate between Imperial and Cibola NWR.

Issue 14: Airspace

Public Issue Summary

Airspace issues included the need for a landing strip along the lower Colorado River for private pilot access to recreational uses, the concern for illegal plane landing on the YPG, and the need to close the dirt road northeast of Martinez Lake because it is being used as a landing strip and is unsafe for such use.

BLM Management Concerns

- Consider appropriate management of resources and uses relative to overflights, as commercial and private overflights are a growing use of public lands.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Want continuous access to military training routes (airspace).

Planning Criteria

The 1990 Arizona Desert Wilderness Act, which established the existing wilderness areas in the YFO, provided that these wilderness designations were not to interfere with the continuing use of existing military training areas, modification of those military training areas, or the development of new low-level routes needed to support military training missions.

Issues Not Within BLM Jurisdiction

- Dirt road northeast of Martinez Lake is used as landing strip and should be closed due to safety concerns (not maintained, too close to Cibola Range, no security, obstructions in violation of FAA rules).
- YPG needs to be protected from air encroachment. Pilots fly illegally in YPG airspace and land on their property because there is no designated airstrip.

Issue 15: Grazing Use

Public Issue Summary

Grazing issues raised included the statements that grazing provides an important economic benefit, and the need to coordinate grazing allotments with BLM Phoenix Field Office. Other comments were received on the impacts of grazing to Sonoran pronghorn, desert tortoise,

watershed, vegetation, invasive vegetation, soil, and during drought. It was requested that grazing allotment plans be very specific in terms of standards, stocking rates, and other standards including strategies to reduce grazing if necessary.

BLM Management Concerns

- Evaluate whether and where certain lands are available for grazing.
- Consider closing ephemeral allotments that have not been grazed in 10-15 years.
- Unauthorized grazing use is a problem.
- Evaluate existing and potential range improvements, including maintenance, to determine if they are compatible with land management goals.
- Re-evaluate the grazing classification for perennial and ephemeral (i.e., seasonal) allotments.
- Consider the application of the ephemeral rule to grazing on public lands.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Open range areas and cattle guards are within close proximity to state highways.
- Grazing allotments are located near national wildlife refuges. Trespass livestock is a concern.

Planning Criteria

BLM will manage grazing through existing laws, regulations, and policies including the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. BLM will provide for livestock management in an environmentally sensitive manner consistent with resource management objectives, including achieving desired plant communities, and land use conditions. Proposed decisions will determine if allotments are open or closed to grazing in accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act and, if open, in what manner. Decisions will include a strategy for ensuring that proper grazing practices are followed while preserving habitats for sensitive plant and wildlife species. Appropriate best management practices will be followed to protect rangeland resources and, where necessary, to mitigate any conflicts with other uses and values. Administrative actions to assure compliance with existing permit/lease requirements, to modify permits and leases, to monitor and supervise grazing use, and to remedy unauthorized grazing use will continue.

Issue 16: Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

Public Issue Summary

The identification of lands with wilderness characteristics was a frequently mentioned issue. Some commenters want lands with wilderness characteristics identified and protected and closed to OHV use. Specifically mentioned areas for identification include BLM lands adjacent to Kofa NWR WAs, Columbus Peak, Cortez Peak, and all areas adjacent to existing YFO WAs. Another public issue was the opposition to managing for wilderness characteristics, and the statement that managing for wilderness characteristics essentially creates new wilderness in violation of congressional intent.

BLM Management Concerns

- Consider wilderness characteristics when making land and resource allocations.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

No agency or tribal concerns were identified for this issue.

Planning Criteria

Consistent with BLM policy, the Secretary of the Interior letter to Senator Robert Bennett (dated April 11, 2003), and the settlement in the case of Utah v. Norton (dated April 14, 2003), BLM has the authority to discuss and incorporate wilderness values into the land use plan, in accordance with the public process incorporated in all land use planning efforts. Thus, BLM is committed to listening to public input through the land use planning process and, where appropriate, managing specified areas of land for wilderness values. However, BLM has no authority to establish new Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) or to report such areas to Congress. BLM can protect areas in their natural state using a wide range of land use tools other than the WSA designation process. The BLM will review, through this planning process, lands within the planning area that may possess remote or primitive characteristics.

Issues Not Within BLM Jurisdiction

- Norton's April 2003 settlement was unlawful and FLPMA gives BLM the authority to create WSAs.

Issue 17: Special Area Designations (including existing Wilderness Areas, National Recreation Trails, National Historic Trails, Back Country Byways, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern)

Public Issue Summary

Issues focused on the need to identify and protect new and existing special areas in general and from activities including oil/gas development, logging, mining, OHV, grazing, and road construction. ACEC designation was requested for Sonoran pronghorn and desert tortoise habitat. It was also requested that the river corridor be designated as a natural resource area rather than general use.

Comments were also received in opposition to special area designations stating these designations benefit only those few who are fit enough to hike into them to enjoy them, there should be no further designations as there are numerous other WAs available in the area, and all currently designated areas should be opened for access.

BLM Management Concerns

- Identify partners for National Recreation Trails and National Historic Trails.
- Evaluate potential for designating additional National Recreation Trails, National Historic Trails, state recreation trails, and Back Country Byways.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Concern that additional restrictive management or allocations will hinder AGFD ability to propose/implement wildlife management activities.
- The RMP must be clear when describing management allocations.
- AGFD supports designating key habitats as long as future conditions acknowledge wildlife as a management priority and prescriptions allow for both wildlife management and reasonable public access.
- Prefer to not have additional closures or withdrawals on public lands.

Planning Criteria

Wilderness Areas – Wilderness areas are designated by Congress and are managed according to the *Wilderness Act of 1964*, the *Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990*, regulations for wilderness management at 43 CFR 6300, BLM Manuals 8560 and 8561, BLM Handbook H-8560-1, interim operations plans currently in effect for range, wildlife, and fire management in wilderness, and Wilderness Management Plans. The land use plan will not address reducing or eliminating existing WAs, changing existing wilderness boundaries, proposing new WAs, or

allowing motor vehicle or other use of mechanical transportation in any wilderness area not already authorized.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) – ACECs will be designated where special management attention is required to protect historical, cultural, or scenic values, natural resources or processes, or human life and safety. Management requirements for ACECs will be identified in the plan. YFO is looking at select areas to consider for new designation (i.e., Dripping Springs and Colorado River Limitrophe), as well as expanding the existing Sears Point. ACECs should not be used as a substitute for wilderness designation when an area otherwise meets the criteria for wilderness.

Issue 18: Environmental Justice

Public Issue Summary

There were no comments received regarding environmental justice.

BLM Management Concerns

Management concerns will be identified during the Management Situation Analysis phase.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

No agency or tribal concerns were identified for this issue.

Planning Criteria

The lifestyles of area residents will be considered in the plans for low income and minority populations.

Issue 19: Socioeconomics

Public Issue Summary

Many of the comments regarding socioeconomics focused on the issue of potential income or loss of income from various uses. This includes income from agricultural leases to the local agricultural economy and BLM (through lease) and economic benefits of ecotourism and the potential income loss if wilderness is not protected. Other issues included the economic drain of grazing and the economic benefit of managing for wilderness characteristics rather than the more costly development, maintenance, restoration, and law enforcement required by OHV use. One

comment pertained to the inability of some lower-income users to pay user fees, and that user fees impact the lower income users more than other users.

BLM Management Concerns

Management concerns will be identified during the Management Situation Analysis phase.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Identify socioeconomic conditions for the local community related to the adjacent Imperial Sand Dunes.

Planning Criteria

Management actions will be evaluated for socioeconomic impacts by using the “Economic Profile System” and other tools such as IMPLAN.

Issues Addressed Administratively

- Area should be managed through a central office with local representatives. People of La Paz County have no way to communicate with BLM individual in person.

Issue 20: Law Enforcement (including Public Safety)

Public Issue Summary

Law enforcement issues primarily focused on the need for more staff to better monitor the area, including dumping and trash stations, and stronger prosecution and fining of violators for activities such as illegal dumping, vandalism, illegal entry, and hunters taking game over the legal limit.

BLM Management Concerns

- Determine which uses are incompatible due to public safety issues. Target shooting, for example, is a legitimate public lands use but may place nonparticipants at risk, particularly in areas of heavy use.
- Consider the increasing concern regarding undocumented immigrant traffic and smuggling activities on the public lands relative to public and employee safety.

- Determine what level of maintenance should be provided on roads to maintain access and to protect both public safety and natural and cultural resources.
- Consider the effects of hazardous sites, including those created by illegal dumping, on public health and safety.
- Consider outreach programs that provide visitor information including public safety, resource protection, and appropriate uses.
- When developing resource management objectives, consider the need of an enforcement aspect, including developing appropriate penalties.
- Determine what level of maintenance should be provided on roads to maintain access and to protect both public safety and natural and cultural resources.

Agency Concerns

- Address illegal dumping on public lands through proper coordination with local law enforcement.

Planning Criteria

There are no resource-specific planning criteria identified for Law Enforcement.

Issues Addressed Administratively

- The confluence needs to be cleaned up and maintained in a safe fashion.

Issues Not Within BLM Jurisdiction

- Some private land holders allow hunters to kill over their quota, hunters should be checked on.

Issue 21: Border Issues and Undocumented Immigrants

Public Issue Summary

There were a few comments received regarding border issues. Some issues focused on the impact of illegal immigration to natural resources and the creation of undesignated travel routes. Coordination between BLM and other agencies to address all environmental impacts of border control was also an issue. One comment stated that agricultural use aids in border control, allowing easier security of the area that would revert to underbrush, if not under agricultural production.

BLM Management Concerns

- Identify land use plan decisions that need to be made regarding international boundary issues and law enforcement.
- Collaborate with other agencies to address the impacts on resources caused by undocumented immigrants and drug smugglers.
- Develop strategies to encourage undocumented immigrants to remain on existing roads, to not litter, and to protect and respect natural resources.
- Undocumented immigrants and drug smugglers often drive vehicles off of roads, leave behind trash, and burn campfires. This has resulted in management concerns including resource damage (to soils, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, etc.), unsanitary human waste disposal, costly clean-up of trash, and the potential for wildfire.
- Safety is another significant management concern. Undocumented immigrants are frequently ill-prepared for the harsh environmental and climatic conditions they encounter, particularly in the summer. This can result in the need for search and rescue operations. Recently, the illegal activities also have resulted in an increased concern for employee and visitor safety as drug smugglers and guides (also known as coyotes) leading the undocumented immigrants have been carrying and sometimes using lethal weapons.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- Distribution and species of vegetation to promote visibility of undocumented immigrants
- International border issues related to local law enforcement coordination

Planning Criteria

There is no resource specific planning criteria identified for Border Issues and Undocumented Immigrants.

Issue 22: Wild Horses and Burros

Public Issue Summary

Few comments were received on this issue. Some stated that all wild horses and burros should be removed, while others emphasized more control of these animals. One comment stated that water holes for wildlife should also be available to burros.

BLM Management Concerns

- Complete or incorporate Imperial-Trigo Cooperative Management Plan.

- Manage for appropriate levels of utilization of key species.
- Review herd management designations east of State Highway 95.

Agency and Tribal Concerns

- There are wild horses and burros located on the national wildlife refuges.

Planning Criteria

Management of horse and burros would follow the Wild, Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act (1970), as amended by FLPMA (1976) and Public Rangelands Improvement Act (1978). Horses and burros within California would be managed in accordance with the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (2002). Management of wild horses and burros within the Cibola-Trigo HMA would be in accordance with the Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP) (1980). The HMAP would be revised to include multi-agency monitoring protocol, utilization levels, and HMA boundary as agreed to by Imperial-Trigo Planning Team. The NWRs are not within the HMA, however, wild horse and burros use is allowed at minimal levels. Monitoring data will be used to determine Appropriate Management Levels and guide removals to ensure limits set by the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration are maintained.

2.4 ANTICIPATED DECISIONS TO BE MADE

BLM is responsible for multiple-use management of public land and its resources based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with the FLPMA. Management direction resulting from the planning process for the RMP needs to be adaptable to changing conditions and demands over the life of the RMP. RMPs provide management direction and help to determine decisions regarding appropriate multiple uses and allocation of resources, develop strategies to manage and protect resources, and establish systems to monitor and evaluate the status of resources and effectiveness of these management practices. As part of an analysis of the management situation, BLM will review the existing condition of the environment, existing management situation, and identify which existing management decisions should be carried forward and where there are opportunities to modify existing management direction and/or develop new management direction.

YFO developed an initial list of preliminary issues/planning questions that may form the foundation of the decisions to be made. These questions may evolve further as the planning process progresses. These questions include the following:

- How do we best protect and manage the natural, biological, cultural, and paleontological resources on public lands?

- What resource uses are appropriate for the YFO? How should public use activities be managed?
- How do we evaluate public lands for special area designations?
- How do we integrate public land management with other agency and community plans?

2.5 EXISTING MANAGEMENT TO BE CARRIED FORWARD

Management decisions from the following plans will be carried forward as valid existing decisions with the exception of those existing decisions that are related to issues and management concerns described in the previous section. As described in Section 1, the public land administered by the YFO is managed with direction from three LUPs and nine LUP amendments:

- Yuma District Resource Management Plan (Yuma RMP) (1987)
- Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan (1988)
- Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan (1983)

In addition to the LUPs listed above, there are nine LUP amendments including:

- Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan – Goldwater Amendment (1990)
- Yuma District Resource Management Plan Amendment (1992)
- Yuma District (Bill Williams) Resource Management Plan Amendment (1994a)
- Yuma District (Havasui) Resource Management Plan Amendment (1994b)
- Yuma District (Lands) Resource Management Plan Amendment (1996)
- Statewide Legislative EIS to recommend suitability for Wild and Scenic Rivers (1996)
- Statewide Amendment for Standards and Guides (1997)
- Yuma District (North Baja EIS) Resource Management Plan Amendment (2002)
- Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels and Air Quality Management (2004)

Other management directives that will be followed by the YFO include BLM programmatic level documents including but not limited to:

- Final Environmental Impact Statement, Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States (May 1991)
- Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (1997)
- FONSI and Programmatic EA for Selected Actions for Mining Claim and Mill Site Use and Occupancy in Arizona
- Arizona State Lands Programmatic EA (under development)

Many of the elements of the existing management decisions will be carried forward given the existing plans have worked well and remain valid, in some cases. Determining which existing management decisions will be carried forward is a part of the planning process for this RMP. The RMP will be developed in accordance with guidance set forth in BLM H-1601-1 – Land Use Planning Handbook.

SECTION 3 – PRELIMINARY PLANNING CRITERIA

BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-2) require the development of planning criteria to guide preparation of the RMP. Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct plan preparation. They ensure the plan is tailored to the identified issues and that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Planning criteria are based on applicable laws and regulations, agency guidance, the result of consultation and coordination with the public, other federal, state, and local agencies, and Native American tribes (see Preparation Plan Appendix B-Laws, Regulations, Orders, Manuals, and Policies relating to RMPs).

The following preliminary criteria were developed and were reviewed by the public during scoping; they were also included in the *Federal Register* notice. After public comment analysis, the final planning criteria will be approved and distributed to all interested parties collaborating in the planning process.

3.1 GENERAL PLANNING CRITERIA

1. The plans will be completed in compliance with the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act*, *Endangered Species Act*, *National Environmental Policy Act*, *National Historic Preservation Act*, and all other relevant federal laws, executive orders (including wilderness legislation), national strategic plans and management policies of BLM.

In addition, there are other cross-cutting environmental laws and Executive Orders that may be affected by an agency's action, and they have been considered. These authorities include (but are not limited to) the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Archeological Resource Protection Act, and such Executive Orders as EO 11593, "Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment," and EO 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations."

2. The plan will result in determinations as required by special program and resource specific guidance detailed in Appendix C of BLM's Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), as amended by IM No. 2004-007, Attachment 1; Subject: Land Use Plan and Implementation Plan Guidance for Wildland Fire Management.
3. Where planning decisions have previously been made that still apply, those decisions will be carried forward into the plan. They will also use information developed and management alternatives proposed in previous studies of the planning area. Relevant decisions and alternatives proposed in previous studies of the planning area will be brought forward into the plan.
 - a. The planning team will work collaboratively with the State of Arizona; Yuma, La Paz, Imperial, Riverside, and Maricopa counties; Tribal governments; municipal

governments; other federal agencies; the Resource Advisory Council; and all other interested groups, agencies, and individuals. Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, tribal, and federal agencies, consistent with federal law and regulations.

4. Native American tribal consultations will be conducted in accordance with policy. Tribal concerns will be given due consideration.
5. Coordinate with the USFWS through the Section 7 consultation process to protect and enhance known habitat for threatened and endangered species and assist in the recovery of listed species to maintain biological diversity within the planning area. Review special status species, including species proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act, throughout the planning area to conserve habitat through inventory, monitoring, and adoption of conservation measures needed to curtail listing.
6. Coordination with the Arizona and California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will be conducted throughout the planning process.
7. The plan will recognize the states' responsibilities to manage wildlife populations, including uses such as hunting and fishing, within the planning area.
8. The plan will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which BLM will rely in managing public lands within the YFO.
9. The RMP/EIS will incorporate the following existing plans and their decisions: Standards for Rangeland Health (1997) as Land Health Standards applicable to all resources and activities and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (1997), Proposed Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (2003) and the Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management (2004). The Record of Decision for BLM vegetation treatment EIS will be incorporated upon its completion.
10. The RMP/EIS will carry forward existing wilderness areas, national trails, and ACECs.
11. Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, tribal, and federal agencies as long as the decisions are in conformance with legal mandates on management of public lands.
12. Geospatial data will be automated within a Geographic Information System (GIS) to facilitate discussions of the affected environment, alternative formulation, analysis of environmental consequences, and display of the results.
13. Resource allocations must be reasonable, achievable, supported by technology, and within budgetary constraints. Resource allocations must also be consistent with current BLM policy.

14. The lifestyles and concerns of area residents will be recognized in the plan.
15. Under the Clean Air Act, BLM administered lands were given a class II air quality classification unless reclassified by the states of California and Arizona. This classification allows moderate deterioration associated with moderate, well-controlled industrial and population growth. Actions within the Yuma County PM₁₀ non-attainment area will be assessed for conformance with air quality standards.
16. Protect the public from known safety hazards of abandoned mine lands (AML) and hazardous materials (hazmat) sites within the planning area. As identified in the draft IM entitled Mitigating and Remediating Physical Safety Hazards at AML Sites, the YFO will address closure or signage of all AML sites close to Recreation Management Information System (RMIS) sites. Closures and signage include temporary and remedial measures.
17. YFO is incorporating the Discovery Process™ (James Kent and Associates) to detect emerging issues affecting public land by engaging local citizens in the land use planning process.
18. Incorporate management decisions for the YFO RMP in accordance with the Final Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert (NECO) Coordinated Management Plan.
19. Incorporate management decisions from existing activity plans. A list of related plans can be found in Appendix A of the YFO Preparation Plan.
20. The plan will set forth a framework for managing recreational and commercial activities in order to maintain existing natural landscapes and to provide for the enjoyment and safety of the visiting public.

SECTION 4 – DATA SUMMARY/DATA GAPS

To perform a thorough analysis of project alternatives, data must be gathered for all of the resources to be analyzed. Much of the data will be collected in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) format, which will provide the framework for the data collection plan. This format will allow for the data to be mapped, and a qualitative, as well as a quantitative approach to be used in the analysis. Maps will be produced and printed in the document for the appropriate resources using the GIS data collected. Based on the issues raised during scoping, BLM will develop a database, which includes existing data available to BLM and identifies data gaps that must be filled during the RMP/EIS process.

This section documents existing GIS data and data and inventory needs, which will be necessary to prepare an RMP to meet current planning guidance, and to address anticipated issues unique to the planning area. Executive Order 12906 requires data collection to follow standards set forth by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC). The standards assure that data contain metadata (information about the data) for geospatial data used by federal agencies. Standards for existing BLM data follow Arizona BLM standards for metadata needs. Arizona Land Resource Information System (ALRIS) data follow Arizona BLM standards and include metadata. New data will follow National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) standards and will have metadata stored in a database in conformance with BLM and FGDC standards. Existing GIS layers will be converted to the appropriate format that is compatible with BLM's Planning effort.

In addition to this data summary, Tetra Tech will develop an updated GIS data inventory and GIS revision strategy. The GIS data inventory will be an updated version of the GIS data inventory provided by BLM. The GIS revision strategy will identify the GIS data sources to be used in the RMP and outline the methods and level of effort needed to resolve data gaps. Where new data needs to be developed, the GIS revision strategy will outline a methodology, level of effort, and schedule.

Data Inventory

Cultural Resource Management – YFO has significant cultural resources that are visited by public land users. In order to protect these sites, cultural areas that were previously designated in other land use plans (in addition to the Yuma RMP) will be evaluated. The Anza Trail, a national trail within the YFO, will be located and designated on the ground. AZSite is the only GIS data available for cultural resources. Until the end of 2002, data was not reliable due to lack of control. Software was altered in 2003 to be stricter on data input. Data is now connected to AZsiteasu and the metadata is updated as it is collected by archeologists.

Environmental Justice – The YFO will gather data from the national census and local and county databases concerning minority and low-income populations in order to determine if proposed actions may cause disproportionate impacts to these populations.

Fire Management – The information needed for the YFO RMP revision is available within the Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management, and upon completion of the YFO Fire Management Plan revision. Projected completion dates for these documents are May and September 2004, respectively. Information collected during the completion of the fire management plan such as fire frequency and distribution, vegetation inventory, and possibly delineation of potential and suitable habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher will help to make resource assessments during the Yuma RMP.

Hazardous Materials – The following three types of data could be collected: (1) inventory and map of recent pollution from public lands dumping containing hazmat, (2) transfer of unexploded ordnance contamination from MTPs to GIS, and (3) inventory and map of pollutants from mineral ore processing sites at active or abandoned mines. AML data is available from BLM's Arizona State Office. A hazmat site inventory would entail collecting information and recording the locations of the following types of sites: unauthorized dump sites, unexploded ordnance, AMLs, hazmat site inventory, and formerly used defense sites. It would also include updating the existing database.

Lands and Realty – Sources of data exist in LR2000, master title plats (MTPs), and historical indices (HI). GIS has no data on existing RMP-designated utility corridors. Most land use locations are not in GIS but should be on master title plats. Potential withdrawal and clean up areas will be determined, and the land tenure theme will be checked for accuracy. Current data are from the ALRIS. The Western Utility Group Corridor Study will be used for recommendations to propose new utility corridors. Communication Site Management Plans have been completed. Agricultural leases would be helpful to see in GIS for MSCP purposes.

Minerals – Sand and gravel extraction areas will be determined. Areas of prospectively valuable minerals will be mapped and entered into GIS. Mineral materials sites will also be mapped, which should include BLM sale and free use sites, community pits, common use areas, and Title 23 rights-of-way (material sites for Federal highways). Mineral material pits and quarries on private and state lands will also be mapped. Existing U.S. Geographical Survey (USGS) information would be incorporated into the plan.

Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species – Inventory efforts are ongoing as a result of a cooperative weed management area with the Sonoran Desert Invasive Species Council. Key species include saltcedar and giant salvinia. There are currently three years of salvinia inventory data available.

Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) – About 70 percent of the OHV route inventory for YFO is complete. This inventory will be completed in order to address route designation.

Paleontological Resources – The existing RMP did not address paleontological (paleo) resources. A literature search should be completed to determine the paleo potential within the planning area. A few areas appear to have fossils from the Holocene era.

Rangeland Management – All grazing allotments have been digitized into the GIS, along with about 60 percent of the range improvements, pastures, and other facilities. Evaluations for grazing allotments have recently been completed for compliance with the Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management.

Recreation – GIS data is available for most of the recreation facilities managed by BLM. GIS data for proposed sites will be collected. RMIS data for decisions on potential site use and the need for new developments is available. Data will be gathered for Recreation Opportunity Spectrum and Water Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classifications for the YFO.

Riparian Management – Delineation of riparian and xeroriparian (dry wash) areas will be completed. Existing planning documents will be evaluated to determine the extent of riparian corridors of the lower Colorado and Gila rivers. This information, along with information on current levels of recreational use, will help determine whether revisions to use allocations are warranted for riparian areas.

Socioeconomics – As a result of IM 2003-169, an Economic Profile System will be conducted as a required element to complete the RMP revision. This is a series of workshops throughout the planning area. The Sonoran Institute has completed the economic profile database that was developed as a result of a national BLM task order. The information provided by the database can provide local information related to topics such as, population by age and gender, employment by industry, income distribution, and housing. Other data sources will include national census and local and county databases.

Soils – Sensitive soil inventory will allow areas for soil conservation to be identified, which may include areas such as desert pavement and sand dunes.

Special Area Designations – The YFO will map existing sites, as well as evaluate new proposals. These inventories and GIS maps would assist with this task in bringing forward information that may meet SMA criteria. The YFO will determine if areas with characteristics worthy of resource protection by means of special area designations such as ACEC exist in the planning area.

Special Status Species – The GIS has limited data for desert tortoise, Southwestern willow flycatcher, and flat-tailed horned lizard. Most of these data end at the old Yuma District boundary. More data will be obtained through the Lower Gila North and South RMPs. The field office will have an agreement in place for interagency sharing of GIS data. GIS data is available for the LCRMSCP.

Historical habitat and species inventories will be evaluated for their accuracy and reliability. New inventories may be needed to replace outdated information. Selected areas (e.g., Palomas Plains) will be inventoried and evaluated for sensitive species habitat to guide development of new habitat management plans and future management decisions to benefit sensitive species.

Data for fish and aquatic habitats will be entered into GIS. Data are needed for several other species that have been or may become listed.

No Threatened and Endangered (T&E) plants exist within the YFO. Rare plant locality data will be added to the GIS database.

Transportation/Access – Transportation data are available on GIS for a majority of the planning area. Ongoing data collection is updated as it is collected. The YFO has an urgent need to identify OHV trails and drivable washes based on the evidence of increased usage from visitors and impacts to cultural and natural resources.

Vegetation Management – Vegetation data is available for California. Vegetation data is also available (source: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation - Boulder City) for the Colorado River Corridor south to Mexico. Outside sources may be necessary to contract for collection, synthesis, and production of vegetation data in GIS formats. This data may also be available from the YFO Fire Management Plan that is scheduled for completion September 2004.

Visual Resources Management (VRM) – VRM classifications will be reevaluated and mapped for the entire planning area. The existing RMP only generalized VRM classes by geographic features and did not specifically map the areas by boundaries.

Wilderness Characteristics – YFO has wilderness inventory data from FLPMA Section 603.

Wild Horses and Burros – Herd area and management area boundaries have been digitized in GIS for the Cibola-Trigo Herd Management Area (HMA). For the Cibola-Trigo HMA, permanent vegetation monitoring sites and historical capture locations have been digitized into the GIS. In cooperation with the California Desert District, 16 burros were fitted with radio telemetry collars in the Chocolate/Mules and Cibola-Trigo HMAs in California and all tracking data are being digitized into the GIS. Limited data exists on this HMA.

SECTION 5 – SUMMARY OF FUTURE STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

BLM planning process includes nine basic steps. These steps allow for community and political input, participation, and support. BLM collaborative approach to planning entails working together with Tribal, State, and local governments; other Federal agencies; and interested organizations and individuals, throughout the planning process through mailings, public workshops, open houses, and public response periods. This approach helps to establish a long-term commitment by the participants for a shared responsibility and stewardship for the land.

BLM resource management planning process is described in *Code of Federal Regulations* Title 43, Chapter II, Part 1610.4-1 through 1610.4-9. The basic steps of this process are listed below.

5.1 IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

Issues were identified through the scoping process. The issues suggested by the public, along with issues identified by BLM are documented in this scoping report. Issues may be modified during the planning process to incorporate new information.

5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria guide the development of the RMP to ensure that it focuses on the issues previously identified and to avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis. BLM established the planning criteria based on issues identified through the scoping process. These criteria are described in Sections 2 and 3 of this Scoping Report.

5.3 INVENTORY DATA AND INFORMATION COLLECTION

Data and information collection will include existing data described in Section 4 of this Scoping Report. Additional data will be obtained from current studies being conducted by BLM and specific agency coordination will be initiated, including the USFWS Section 7 consultation and SHPO Section 106 consultation.

5.4 ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT SITUATION

The management situation analysis is an assessment of the current management situation in the resource area and is used to identify opportunities when forming alternatives to the existing management practices.

5.5 FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVES

A range of reasonable management alternatives to the existing management situation, which address the issues identified in scoping, will be considered. One alternative analyzed will be the no action alternative, which assumes that the present management practices continue. All of the alternatives will comply with BLM's planning regulations and policies and other laws and regulations.

5.6 ESTIMATION OF EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVES

BLM will assess all of the potential effects of the proposed management alternatives.

5.7 SELECTION OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The YFO manager will develop a proposal with a preferred alternative based on the assessment of all proposed alternatives. The preferred alternative will be incorporated into the draft RMP and draft EIS. The draft RMP/EIS, with the recommended preferred alternative, will be forwarded to BLM Arizona State Director for approval, publication, and filing with the Environmental Protection Agency. The draft RMP/EIS will be distributed to the Governors of Arizona and California and other federal, state, and local agencies, and tribes, and will be available for public review and comment for a 90-day period.

5.8 SELECTION OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

After publication of the draft RMP/EIS and reviewing all of the comments received, the YFO will select and recommend to BLM Arizona State Director for review and publication, a proposed RMP and final EIS. After a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review and simultaneous 30-day protest period, a final decision will be made and the Record of Decision and approved RMP will be published.

5.9 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The proposed plan will establish intervals and standards for monitoring and evaluation of the plan. Monitoring will allow BLM to determine the effectiveness of the RMP and to determine whether there is cause to warrant amendments or revisions to the plan.

SECTION 6 – REFERENCES

Code of Federal Regulations. Title 43, Chapter II, Part 1610.4-1 through 1610.4-9.

James Kent and Associates. 2001. *Social Considerations for the Yuma Field Office in Developing a Preparation Plan for a New Resource Management Plan*. May 21-25.

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U.S. Department of the Interior, BLM. 2004. *Proposed Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Environmental Assessment*. Arizona State Office. March.

_____. 2004. *Land Use Planning Handbook*. BLM Handbook H-1601-1. July release.